

THE
WORKS

NICHOLAS ROWE, Esq.

THE

WORKS



NICHOLAS ROWE, ESQ.

7 MA 55



Kneller pinx^t

NICHOLAS ROWE Esq^r

THE
WORKS
OF
NICHOLAS ROWE, Esq. *K*
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING
THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER;
TAMERLANE:
THE FAIR PENITENT; AND
THE BITER.

A NEW EDITION.

ORNAMENTED WITH COPPER-PLATES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

L O N D O N:
Printed for W. LOWNDES; J. NICHOLS; S. BLADON;
and W. NICOLL.

MDCXCII.

2

NICHOLAS ROWE, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CONSTANTINOPLE

PRINTED BY J. B. ST. JOHN, 1818.



A NEW EDITION.

ENRICHED WITH COPPER PLATES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:

Printed by W. Lowndes, Nicholas & Dutton;

and W. Phillips.

MILKED.







THE
L I F E
OF
NICHOLAS ROWE, *Esq.*

BY DR. JOHNSON.

NICHOLAS ROWE was born at Little Berkford in Bedfordshire, in 1673. His family had long possessed a considerable estate, with a good house, at Lambertoun in Devonshire. The ancestor from whom he descended in a direct line, received the arms borne by his descendants for his bravery in the Holy War. His father John Rowe, who was the first that quitted his paternal acres to practise any art of profit, professed the law, and published Benlow's and Dallison's Reports in the reign of James the Second, when, in opposition to the notions then diligently propagated, of dispensing power, he ventured to remark how low his authors rated the prerogative. He was made a serjeant, died April 30, 1692, and was buried in the Temple Church.

Nicholas was first sent to a private school at Highgate; and being afterwards removed to Westminster, was at twelve years chosen one of the King's scholars. His master was Busby, who suffered none of his scholars to let their powers lie uselefs; and his exercises in several
a languages

languages are said to have been written with uncommon degrees of excellence, and yet to have cost him very little labour.

At sixteen he had in his father's opinion made advances in learning sufficient to qualify him for the study of law, and was entered a student of the Middle Temple, where for some time he read statutes and reports with proficiency proportionate to the force of his mind, which was already such that he endeavoured to comprehend law, not as a series of precedents, or collection of positive precepts, but as a system of rational government, and impartial justice.

When he was nineteen, he was by the death of his father left more to his own direction, and probably from that time suffered law gradually to give way to poetry. At twenty-five he produced *The Ambitious Step-mother*, which was received with so much favour, that he devoted himself from that time wholly to elegant literature.

His next tragedy was *Tamerlane*, in which, under the name of Tamerlane, he intended to characterise King William, and Lewis the Fourteenth under that of Bajazet. The virtues of Tamerlane seem to have been arbitrarily assigned him by his poet, for I know not that history gives any other qualities than those which make a conqueror. The fashion however of the time was, to accumulate upon Lewis all that can raise horror and detestation; and whatever good was withheld from him, that it might not be thrown away, was bestowed upon King William.

This was the tragedy which Rowe valued most, and that which probably, by the help of political auxiliaries, excited most applause; but occasional poetry must often content itself with occasional praise. *Tamerlane* for a long time was acted only once a year, on the night when King William landed. Our quarrel with Lewis has been long over, and it now gratifies neither zeal nor malice to see him painted with aggravated features, like a Saracen upon a sign.

The

The *Fair Penitent*, his next production, is one of the most pleasing tragedies on the stage, where it still keeps its turns of appearing, and probably will long keep them, for there is scarcely any work of any poet at once so interesting by the fable, and so delightful by the language. The story is domestick, and therefore easily received by the imagination, and assimilated to common life; the diction is exquisitely harmonious, and soft or spritely as occasion requires.

The character of *Lothario* seems to have been expanded by Richardson into *Lovelace*, but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. *Lothario*, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone to teach us at once esteem and detestation, to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, elegance, and courage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain.

The fifth act is not equal to the former; the events of the drama are exhausted, and little remains but to talk of what is past. It has been observed, that the title of the play does not sufficiently correspond with the behaviour of *Calista*, who at last shews no evident signs of repentance, but may be reasonably suspected of feeling pain from detection rather than from guilt, and expresses more shame than sorrow, and more rage than shame.

His next was *Ulysses*; which, with the common fate of mythological stories, is now generally neglected. We have been too early acquainted with the poetical heroes, to expect any pleasure from their revival; to shew them as they have already been shewn, is to disgust by repetition; to give them new qualities or new adventures, is to offend by violating received notions.

The *Royal Convert* seems to have a better claim to longevity. The fable is drawn from an obscure and barbarous age, to which fictions are most easily and properly adapted; for when objects are imperfectly seen, they easily take forms from imagination. The

scene lies among our ancestors in our own country, and therefore very easily catches attention. *Rhodogune* is a personage truly tragical, of high spirit, and violent passions, great with tempestuous dignity, and wicked with a soul that would have been heroic if it had been virtuous. The motto seems to tell that this play was not successful.

Rowe does not always remember what his characters require. In *Tamerlane* there is some ridiculous mention of the God of Love; and Rhodogune, a savage Saxon, talks of Venus, and the eagle that bears the thunder of Jupiter.

This play discovers its own date, by a prediction of the *Union*, in imitation of Cranmer's prophetick promises to *Henry the Eighth*. The anticipated blessings of union are not very naturally introduced, nor very happily expressed.

He once tried to change his hand. He ventured on a comedy, and produced the *Biter*; with which, though it was unfavourably treated by the audience, he was himself delighted; for he is said to have sat in the house, laughing with great vehemence, whenever he had in his own opinion produced a jest. But finding that he and the public had no sympathy of mirth, he tried at lighter scenes no more.

After the Royal Convert appeared *Jane Shore*, written, as its author professes, *in imitation of Shakspeare's style*. In what he thought himself an imitator of Shakspeare, it is not easy to conceive. The numbers, the diction, the sentiments, and the conduct, every thing in which imitation can consist, are remote in the utmost degree from the manner of Shakspeare; whose dramas it resembles only as it is an English story, and as some of the persons have their names in history. This play, consisting chiefly of domestick scenes and private distresses, lays hold upon the heart. The wife is forgiven because she repents, and the husband is honoured because he forgives. This therefore is one of those pieces which we still welcome on the stage.

His

His last tragedy was *Lady Jane Gray*. This subject had been chosen by Mr. Smith, whose papers were put into Rowe's hands such as he describes them in his Preface. This play likewise was sunk into oblivion. From this time he gave nothing more to the stage.

Being by a competent fortune exempted from any necessity of combating his inclination, he never wrote in distress, and therefore does not appear to have ever written in haste. His works were finished to his own approbation, and bear few marks of negligence or hurry. It is remarkable that his prologues and epilogues are all his own, though he sometimes supplied others; he afforded help, but did not solicit it.

As his studies necessarily made him acquainted with Shakspeare, and acquaintance produced veneration, he undertook (1709) an edition of his works, from which he neither received much praise, nor seems to have expected it; yet, I believe, those who compare it with former copies, will find that he has done more than he promised; and that, without the pomp of notes or boasts of criticism, many passages are happily restored. He prefixed a life of the author, such as tradition then almost expiring could supply, and a preface, which cannot be said to discover much profundity or penetration. He at least contributed to the popularity of his author.

He was willing enough to improve his fortune by other arts than poetry. He was under secretary for three years when the Duke of Queensberry was secretary of state, and afterwards applied to the Earl of Oxford for some public employment. Oxford enjoined him to study Spanish; and when, some time afterwards, he came again, and said that he had mastered it, dismissed him with this congratulation, "Then, Sir, I envy you the pleasure of reading Don Quixote in the original."

This story is sufficiently attested; but why Oxford, who desired to be thought a favourer of literature, should thus insult a man of acknowledged merit; or how Rowe, who was so keen a Whig that he did not willingly converse with men of the opposite party, could

ask preferment from Oxford, it is not now possible to discover. Pope, who told the story, did not say on what occasion the advice was given; and though he owned Rowe's disappointment, doubted whether any injury was intended him, but thought it rather Lord Oxford's *odd way*.

It is likely that he lived on discontented through the rest of Queen Anne's reign; but the time came at last when he found kinder friends. At the accession of King George, he was made Poet Laureat; by the ejection of poor Nahum Tate, who (1716) died in the Mint, where he was forced to seek shelter by extreme poverty. He was made likewise one of the land surveyors of the customs of the port of London. The Prince of Wales chose him clerk of his council; and the Lord Chancellor Parker, as soon as he received the seals, appointed him, unasked, secretary of the presentations. Such an accumulation of employments undoubtedly produced a very considerable revenue.

Having already translated some parts of *Lucan's Pharsalia*, which had been published in the Miscellanies, and doubtless received many praises, he undertook a version of the whole work, which he lived to finish, but not to publish. It seems to have been printed under the care of Dr. Welwood, who prefixed the author's life, in which is contained the following character :

“ As to his person it was graceful and well-made ; his
 “ face regular, and of a manly beauty. As his soul was
 “ well lodged, so its rational and animal faculties excelled in a high degree. He had a quick and fruitful
 “ invention, a deep penetration, and a large compass of
 “ thought, with singular dexterity and easiness in making his thoughts to be understood. He was master of
 “ most parts of polite learning, especially the classical
 “ authors, both Greek and Latin ; understood the
 “ French, Italian, and Spanish Languages, and spoke
 “ the first fluently, and the other two tolerably well.

“ He had likewise read most of the Greek and Roman histories in their original languages, and most
 that

“ that are wrote in English, French, Italian, and Spanish. He had a good taste in philosophy; and, having
“ a firm impression of religion upon his mind, he took
“ great delight in divinity and ecclesiastical history, in
“ both which he made great advances in the times he
“ retired into the country, which were frequent. He
“ expressed, on all occasions, his full persuasion of the
“ truth of Revealed Religion: and being a sincere member of the established church himself, he pitied, but
“ condemned not, those that dissented from it. He abhorred the principles of persecuting men upon the account of their opinions in religion; and being strict
“ in his own, he took it not upon him to censure those
“ of another persuasion. His conversation was pleasant,
“ witty, and learned, without the least tincture of affectation or pedantry; and his inimitable manner of
“ diverting and enlivening the company, made it impossible for any one to be out of humour when he was
“ in it. Envy and detraction seemed to be entirely
“ foreign to his constitution; and whatever provocations
“ he met with at any time, he passed them over without
“ the least thought of resentment or revenge. As
“ Homer had a Zoilus, so Mr. Rowe had sometimes
“ his; for there were not wanting malevolent people,
“ and pretenders to poetry too, that would now-and-then bark at his best performances; but he was so
“ much conscious of his own genius, and had so much
“ good-nature as to forgive them; nor could he ever
“ be tempted to return them an answer.

“ The love of learning and poetry made him not the less fit for business, and nobody applied himself closer
“ to it, when it required his attendance. The late Duke
“ of Queensberry, when he was secretary of state, made
“ him his secretary for public affairs; and when that
“ truly great man came to know him well, he was never
“ so pleased as when Mr. Rowe was in his company.
“ After the Duke's death, all avenues were stopped to
“ his preferment; and during the rest of that reign, he
“ passed his time with the Muses and his books, and
“ sometimes the conversation of his friends.

“ When

" When he had just got to be easy in his fortune, and
 " was in a fair way to make it better, death swept him
 " away, and in him deprived the world of one of the
 " best men as well as one of the best geniuses of the age.
 " He died like a Christian and a Philosopher, in charity
 " with all mankind, and with an absolute resignation to
 " the will of God. He kept up his good-humour to
 " the last ; and took leave of his wife and friends, im-
 " mediately before his last agony, with the same tran-
 " quillity of mind, and the same indifference for life, as
 " though he had been upon taking but a short journey.
 " He was twice married, first to a daughter of Mr.
 " Parsons, one of the auditors of the revenue ; and
 " afterwards to a daughter of Mr. Devenish, of a good
 " family in Dorsetshire. By the first he had a son ; and
 " by the second a daughter, married afterwards to Mr.
 " Fane. He died the sixth of December, 1718, in the
 " forty-fifth year of his age ; and was buried the nine-
 " teenth of the same month in Westminster-abbey, in
 " the isle where many of our English poets are interred,
 " over-against Chaucer, his body being attended by a
 " select number of his friends, and the dean and choir
 " officiating at the funeral."

To this character, which is apparently given with the
 fondness of a friend, may be added the testimony of
 Pope ; who says, in a letter to Blount, " Mr. Rowe ac-
 " companied me, and passed a week in the Forest. I
 " need not tell you how much a man of his turn enter-
 " tained me ; but I must acquaint you, there is a vi-
 " vacity and gaiety of disposition, almost peculiar to
 " him, which make it impossible to part from him with-
 " out that uneasiness which generally succeeds all our
 " pleasure." An Epitaph on Rowe is printed in Pope's
 works, though not affixed on the monument.

Pope has left behind him another mention of his com-
 panion, less advantageous, which is thus reported by
 Dr. Warburton :

" Rowe, in Mr. Pope's opinion, maintained a decent
 " character, but had no heart. Mr. Addison was justly
 " offended with some behaviour which arose from that
 " want

“ want, and estranged himself from him ; which Rowe
 “ felt very severely. Mr. Pope, their common friend,
 “ knowing this, took an opportunity, at some juncture
 “ of Mr. Addison’s advancement, to tell him how poor
 “ Rowe was grieved at his displeasure, and what satis-
 “ faction he expressed at Mr. Addison’s good fortune ;
 “ which he expressed so naturally, that he (Mr. Pope)
 “ could not but think him sincere.” Mr. Addison re-
 plied, “ I do not suspect that he feigned ; but the levity
 “ of his heart is such, that he is struck with any new
 “ adventure ; and it would affect him just in the same
 “ manner, if he heard I was going to be hanged.”—
 Mr. Pope said, “ he could not deny but Mr. Addison
 “ understood Rowe well.”

This censure time has not left us the power of con-
 firming or refuting ; but observation daily shews, that
 much stress is not to be laid on hyperbolical accusations,
 and pointed sentences, which even he that utters them
 desires to be applauded rather than credited. Addison
 can hardly be supposed to have meant all that he said.
 Few characters can bear the microscopick scrutiny of wit
 quickened by anger ; and perhaps the best advice to
 authors would be, that they should keep out of the way
 of one another.

Rowe is chiefly to be considered as a tragic writer
 and a translator. In his attempt at comedy he failed ;
 and his occasional poems and short compositions are
 rarely worthy of either praise or censure ; for they seem
 the casual sports of a mind seeking rather to amuse its
 leisure than to exercise its powers.

In the construction of his dramas, there is not much
 art ; he is not a nice observer of the Unities. He ex-
 tends time and varies place as his convenience requires.
 To vary the place is not any violation of Nature, if the
 change be made between the acts ; for it is no less easy
 for the spectator to suppose himself at Athens in the se-
 cond act, than at Thebes in the first ; but to change the
 scene, as is done by Rowe, in the middle of an act, is
 to add more acts to the play, since an act is so much of
 the business as is transacted without interruption. Rowe,
 however,

however, by this licence, easily extricates himself from difficulties; as in *Jane Gray*, when we have been terrified with all the dreadful pomp of public execution, and are wondering how the heroine or the poet will proceed, no sooner has *Jane* pronounced some prophetick rhymes, than—pass and be gone—the scene closes, and *Pembroke* and *Gardiner* are turned out upon the stage.

I know not that there can be found in his plays any deep search into nature, any accurate discriminations of kindred qualities, or nice display of passion in its progress; all is general and undefined. Nor does he much interest or affect the auditor, except in *Jane Shore*, who is always seen and heard with pity. *Alicia* is a character of empty noise, with no resemblance to real sorrow or to natural madness.

Whence, then, has Rowe his reputation? From the reasonableness and propriety of some of his scenes, from the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse. He seldom moves either pity or terror, but he often elevates the sentiments; he seldom pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the understanding.

His translation of the *Golden Verses*, and of the first book of *Quillet's Poem*, have nothing in them remarkable. The *Golden Verses* are tedious.

The version of *Lucan* is one of the greatest productions of English poetry; for there is perhaps none that so completely exhibits the genius and spirit of the original. *Lucan* is distinguished by a kind of dictatorial or philosophic dignity, rather, as Quintilian observes, declamatory than poetical; full of ambitious morality and pointed sentences. comprised in vigorous and animated lines. This character Rowe has very diligently and successfully preserved. His versification, which is such as his contemporaries practised, without any attempt at innovation or improvement, seldom wants either melody or force. His author's sense is sometimes a little diluted by additional infusions, and sometimes weakened by too much expansion. But such faults are

to

to be expected in all translations, from the constraint of measures and dissimilitude of languages. The *Pharfalia* of Rowe deserves more notice than it obtains, and as it is more read will be more esteemed.

List of Mr. Rowe's Dramatic Works with the dates of their Original Publication.

Ambitious Step-Mother; Tragedy	—	1700
Tamerlane; Tragedy	—	1702
Fair Penitent; Tragedy	—	1703
Biter; Comedy	—	1705
Ulysses; Tragedy	—	1706
Royal Convert; Tragedy	—	1708
Jane Shore; Tragedy	—	1713
Jane Gray; Tragedy	—	1715

DIRECTIONS *for the* PLATES.

VOL. I.

Head of the Author to face title.				
Monument, page one of the Life.				
Ambitious Step-Mother to face			page	I
Tamerlane	—	—	—	81
Fair Penitent (Mr. Aickin)	—	—	—	151
Ditto (Mrs. Siddons)	—	—	—	201
Biter	—	—	—	209

VOL. II.

Ulysses	—	—	—	—	I
Royal Convert	—	—	—	—	69
Jane Shore (Mrs. Yates)	—	—	—	—	131
Ditto (Mrs. Siddons)	—	—	—	—	171
Jane Gray	—	—	—	—	187

Lately Published, in fourteen volumes, 12mo. price two pounds ten shillings bound, ornamented and illustrated with near one hundred elegant copper-plates, the greatest part of which are portraits of the most celebrated actors and actresses, taken from life, and engraved by the best masters,

THE NEW ENGLISH THEATRE.

Consisting of seventy-two of the most favourite acting Tragedies, Comedies, and Operas that have been performed at the Theatres Royal; single Plays of which may be had, Price 6d. each.

7 MA 55

AMBITIOUS STEPMOTHER.



Lud Du Guernier inv et Sculp.

THE
AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER:

A
T R A G E D Y.

— *Decet hæc dare dona novercam.*

OVID. *Metam.* lib. 9.

Vane Ligur, frustra que animis elate superbis,

Nequicquam ——— tentasti lubricus artes,

Advenit qui vestra dies muliebribus armis

Verba redargueret.

VIRG. *Æn.* lib. 11.



To the Right Honourable the

E A R L of J E R S E Y,

Lord Chamberlain of His MAJESTY's Household, &c.

MY LORD,

IF any thing may atone for the liberty I take in offering this trifle to your Lordship, it is, that I will engage not to be guilty of the common vice of dedications, nor pretend to give the world an account of the many good qualities they ought to admire in your Lordship. I hope, I may reckon on it as some little piece of merit, in an age where there are so many people write panegyrics, and so few deserve them. I am sure you ought not to sit for your picture, to so ill a hand as mine. Men of your Lordship's figure and station, though useful and ornamental to the age they live in, are yet reserved for the labours of the historian, and the entertainment of posterity; nor ought to be adorned with such pieces of flattery while living, as may render the true history suspected to those that come after. That which should take up all my care at present, is most humbly to beg your Lordship's pardon for importing you on this account; for imagining that your Lordship (whose hours are all dedicated to the best and most important uses) can have any leisure for this piece of poetry. I beg, my Lord, that you will receive it, as it was meant, a mark of my entire respect and veneration.

I hope it may be some advantage to me, that the town has not received this play ill. To have depended merely upon your Lordship's good-nature, and have offered something without any degree of merit, would

have been an unpardonable fault, especially to so good a judge. The play itself, as I present it to your Lordship, is a much more perfect poem than it is in the representation on the stage. I was led into an error in the writing of it, by thinking that it would be easier to retrench than to add: but when I was at last necessitated, by reason of the extreme length, to cut off near six hundred lines, I found that it was maimed by it to a great disadvantage. The fable (which has no manner of relation to any part of true history) was left dark and intricate, for want of a great part of the narration, which was left out in the first scene; and the chain and connexion, which ought to be in the dialogue, was interrupted in many other places. But since what was omitted in the acting is now kept in, I hope it may indifferently entertain your Lordship at an unbending hour. The faults which are most generally found (and which I could be very proud of submitting to your Lordship's judgment, if you can have leisure for so trivial a cause) are, that the catastrophe in the fifth act is barbarous, and shocks the audience. Some people, whose judgment I ought to have a deference for, have told me, that they wished I had given the latter part of the story quite another turn; that *Artaxerxes* and *Amestris* ought to have been preserved, and made happy in the conclusion of the play; that besides the satisfaction which the spectators would have had to have seen two virtuous (or at least innocent) characters rewarded and successful, there might have been also a more noble and instructive moral drawn that way. I must confess, if this be an error (as perhaps it may) it is a voluntary one, and an error of my judgment: Since in the writing I actually made such a sort of an objection to myself, and chose to wind up the story this way. Tragedies have been allowed, I know, to be written both ways very beautifully: But since terror and pity are laid down for the ends of tragedy by the great master and father of criticism, I was always inclined to fancy that the last and remaining impressions, which ought to be left on the minds of an audience, should proceed from one of these two. They should be struck with terror in several parts of the play, but always
con-

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 3

conclude and go away with pity; a sort of regret proceeding from good-nature, which, though an uneasiness, is not altogether disagreeable to the person who feels it. It was this passion that the famous Mr. *Otway* succeeded so well in touching, and must and will at all times affect people, who have any tenderness or humanity. If therefore I had saved *Artaxerxes* and *Amestris*, I believe (with submission to my judges) I had destroyed the greatest occasion for compassion in the whole play. Any body may perceive, that she is raised to some degree of happiness, by hearing that her father and husband are living (whom she had supposed dead) and by seeing the enemy and persecutor of her family dying at her feet, purposely, that the turn of her death may be more surprizing and pitiful. As for that part of the objection, which says, that innocent persons ought not to be shewn unfortunate; the success and general approbation, which many of the best tragedies that have been wrote, and which were built on that foundation, have met with, will be a sufficient answer for me.

That which they call the poetical justice, is, I think, strictly observed; the two principal contrivers of evil, the Statesman and Priest, are punished with death; and the Queen is deposed from her authority by her own son; which, I suppose, will be allowed as the severest mortification that could happen to a woman of her imperious temper.

If there can be any excuse for my entertaining your Lordship with this detail of criticisms, it is, that I would have this first mark of the honour I have for your Lordship, appear with as few faults as possible. Did not the prevailing character of your Lordship's excellent humanity and good-nature encourage me, what ought I not to fear from the niceness of your taste and judgment? The delicacy of your reflections may be very fatal to so rough a draught as this is; but if I will believe (as I am sure I ought to do) all men that I have heard speak of your Lordship, they bid me hope every thing from your goodness. This is that, I must sincerely own, which made me extremely ambitious of your Lordship's patronage for this piece. I am but too

sensible that there are a multitude of faults in it; but since the good-nature of the town has covered, or not taken notice of them, I must have so much discretion, as not to look with an affected nicety into them myself. With all the faults and imperfections which it may have, I must own, I shall be yet very well satisfied with it, if it gives me an opportunity of reckoning myself from this time,

Your LORDSHIP's most obedient

and devoted humble Servant,

N. ROWE.

P R O L O G U E.

*If dying lovers yet deserve a tear,
 If a sad story of a maid's despair
 Yet move compassion in the pitying fair;
 This day the poet does his arts employ,
 The soft accesses of your souls to try.
 Nor let the stoic boast his mind unmov'd
 The Brute philosopher, who ne'er has prov'd
 The joy of loving or of being lov'd;
 Who scorns his human nature to confess,
 And striving to be more than man, is less.
 Nor let the men the weeping fair accuse,
 Those kind protectors of the tragic muse,
 Whose tears did moving Otway's labours crown,
 And made the poor Monimia's grief their own:
 Those tears their art, not weakness has confest,
 Their grief approv'd the niceness of their taste,
 And they wept most, because they judg'd the best.
 O could this age's writers hope to find
 An audience to compassion thus inclin'd,
 The stage would need no farce, nor song, nor dance,
 Nor capering Monsieur brought from active France;
 Clinch and his organ-pipe, his dogs and bear,
 To native Barnet might again repair,
 Or breathe with Captain Otter Bankside air:
 Majestic tragedy should once again
 In purple pomp adorn the swelling scene.
 Her search should ransack all the ancients store,
 The fortunes of their loves and arms explore,
 Such as might grieve you, but shou'd please you more.
 What Shakspeare durst not, this bold age should do,
 And famous Greek and Latin beauties shew:
 Shakspeare, whose genius to itself a law,
 Could men in every height of nature draw,
 And copied all but women that he saw.
 Those ancient heroines your concern should move,
 Their grief and anger much, but most their love;
 For in the account of every age we find
 The best and fairest of that sex were kind,
 To pity always and to love inclin'd.*

*Affert, ye fair ones, who in judgment sit,
 Your ancient empire over love and wit;
 Reform our sense, and teach the men t'obey:
 They'll leave their rumbling, if you lead the way.
 Be but what those before to Otway were;
 O were you but as kind! we know you are as fair.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Artaxerxes,	-	-	Mr. Verbrugen.
Artaban,	-	-	Mr. Booth.
Memnon,	-	-	Mr. Betterton.
Mirza,	-	-	Mr. Freeman.
Magas,	-	-	Mr. Bowman.
Cleanthes,	-	-	Mr. Pack.
Orchanes,	-	-	Mr. Baily.

W O M E N.

Artemisa,	-	-	Mrs. Barry.
Amestris,	-	-	Mrs. Bracegirdle.
Cleone,	-	-	Mrs. Bowman.
Beliza,	-	-	Mrs. Martin.

THE
AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

A C T I.

SCENE, *A Royal Palace.*

Enter at several doors, Mirza and Magas.

Mir. WHAT bring'st thou, *Magas*? Say,
how fares the King? [ing,

Mag. As one, whom when we number with the liv-
We say the most we can; tho' sure it must
Be happier far, to quit a wretched being,
Than keep it on such terms: for as I enter'd
The royal lodging, an universal horror
Struck thro' my eyes, and chill'd my very heart;
The cheerful day was every where shut out
With care, and left a more than midnight darkness,
Such as might ev'n be felt: A few dim lamps,
That feebly lifted up their sickly heads,
Look'd faintly thro' the shade, and made it seem
More dismal by such light; while those that waited,
In solemn sorrow mix'd with wild amazement,
Observ'd a dreadful silence.

Mir. Didst thou see him!

Mag. My Lord, I did: treading with gentle steps,
I reach'd the bed, which held the poor remains
Of great *Asfages*: just as I approach'd,
His drooping lids, that seem'd for ever clos'd,
Were faintly rear'd, to tell me that he liv'd:
The balls of sight, dim and depriv'd of motion,
Sparkled no more with that majestic fire,
At which ev'n Kings have trembled; but had lost
Their common useful office, and were shaded
With an eternal night. Struck with a sight,
That shew'd me human nature fall'n so low,
I hastily retir'd.

Mir. He dies too soon;
And fate, if possible, must be delay'd.

10 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

The thought that labours in my forming brain,
Yet crude and immature, demands more time.
Have the physicians giv'n up all their hopes?
Cannot they add a few days to a Monarch,
In recompence of thousand vulgar fates,
Which their drugs daily hasten?

Mag. As I pass
The outward rooms, I found 'em in consult;
I ask'd 'em if their art was at a stand,
And could not help the King. They shook their heads,
And in most grave and solemn wise unfolded
Matter, which little purported, but words
Rank'd in right learned phrase; all I could learn, was,
That nature's kindly warmth was quite extinct,
Nor could the breath of art kindle again
Th' ethereal fire.

Mir. My royal mistress *Artemisa's* fate,
And all her son, young *Artaban's*, high hopes,
Hang on this lucky crisis; since this day
The haughty *Artaxerxes* and old *Memnon*
Enter *Persopolis*: The yearly feast
Devoted to our glorious God, the sun,
Hides their designs under a holy veil;
And thus religion is a mask for faction.
But let their guardian *Genii* still be watchful,
For if they chance to nod, my waking vengeance
Shall surely catch that moment to destroy 'em.

Mag. 'Tis said the fair *Amestris*, *Memnon's* daughter,
Comes in their company. [ter,

Mir. That fatal beauty,
With most malignant influence, has cross'd
My first and great ambition. When my brother,
The great *Cleander*, fell by *Memnon's* hand,
(You know the story of our houses quarrel)
I fought the King for justice on the murderer;
And to confirm my interest in the court,
In confidence of mighty wealth and power,
A long descent from noble ancestors,
And somewhat of the beauty of the maid,
I offer'd my *Cleone* to the Prince,
Fierce *Artaxerxes*: he, with rude disdain,
Refus'd the proffer; and to grate me more,
Publicly own'd his passion for *Amestris*:

And

And in despite ev'n of his father's justice,
Espous'd the cause of *Memnon*.

Mag. Ev'n from that noted æra, I remember
You dated all your service to the Queen,
Our common mistress.

Mir. 'Tis true, I did so: Nor was it in vain;
She did me right, and satisfy'd my vengeance:
Memnon was banish'd, and the Prince disgrac'd,
Went into exile with him. Since that time,
Since I have been admitted to her council,
And seen her, with unerring judgment, guide
The reins of empire, I have been amaz'd,
To see her more than manly strength of soul,
Cautious in good success, in bad unshaken;
Still arm'd against th' uncertain turns of chance,
Untouch'd by any weakness of her sex,
Their superstition, pity, or their fear;
And is a woman only in her cunning.
What story tells of great *Semiramis*,
Or rolling time, that gathers as it goes,
Has added more, such *Artemisa* is.

Mag. Sure 'twas a mark of an uncommon genius,
To bend a soul like that of great *Arfaces*,
And charm him to her sway.

Mir. Certainly fate,
Or somewhat like the force of fate was in it;
And still whene'er remembrance sets that scene
Before my eyes, I view it with amazement.

Mag. I then was young, a stranger to the court,
And only took the story as reported
By different fame; you must have known it better.

Mir. Indeed I did, then favour'd by the King,
And by that means a sharer in the secret.
'Twas on a day of public festival,
When beauteous *Artemisa* stood to view
(Behind the covert of a golden lattice,)
The King and court returning from the temple:
When just as by her stand *Arfaces* past,
The window by design or chance fell down,
And to his view expos'd her blushing beauties,
She seem'd surpriz'd, and presently withdrew;
But ev'n that moment was an age in love:
So was the Monarch's heart for passion moulded,

So apt to take at first the soft impression.
 Soon as we were alone, I found the evil
 Already past a remedy, and vainly
 Urg'd the resentment of her injur'd Lord :
 His love was deaf to all.

Mag. Was *Tiribastus* absent?

Mir. He was then general of the horse,
 Under old *Memnon* in the *Median* war.
 But if that distant view so much had charm'd him,
 Imagine how he burnt, when, by my means,
 He view'd her beauties nearer; when each action,
 And every graceful sound conspir'd to charm him :
 Joy of her conquest, and the hopes of greatness,
 Gave lustre to her charms, and made her seem
 Of more than mortal excellence. In short,
 After some faint resistance, like a bride
 That strives a while, though eager for the bliss,
 The furious King enjoy'd her :
 And to secure their joys, a snare was laid
 For her unthinking Lord, in which he fell
 Before the fame of this could reach his ears.
 Since that, she still has by successful arts
 Maintain'd that power, which first her beauty gain'd.

Mag. With deepest foresight, wisely has she laid
 A sure foundation for the future greatness
 Of *Artaban*, her only darling son.
 Each busy thought, that rolls within her breast,
 Labours for him : The King, when first he sickn'd,
 Declar'd he should succeed him in the throne.

Mir. That was a point well gain'd; nor were the
 Of *Artaxerxes* worth our least of fears, [eldership
 If *Memnon*'s interest did not prop his cause.
 Since then they stand secur'd, by being join'd,
 From reach of open force, it were a master-piece
 Worthy a thinking head, to sow division
 And seeds of jealousy, to loose those bonds,
 Which knit and hold 'em up; that so divided,
 With ease they might be ruin'd.

Mag. That's a difficulty next to impossible.

Mir. Cease to think so.

The wise and active conquer difficulties,
 By daring to attempt 'em : Sloth and folly
 Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and hazard,

And

And make th' impossibility they fear :
 Ev'n *Memnon's* temper seems to give th' occasion ;
 Of wrong impatient, headlong to revenge ;
 Tho' bold, yet wants that faculty of thinking,
 That should direct his anger. Valiant fools
 Were made by nature for the wise to work with ;
 They are their tools, and 'tis the sport of statesmen,
 When heroes knock their knotty heads together,
 And fall by one another.

Mag. What you've said,
 Has wak'd a thought in me which may be lucky :
 E'er he was banish'd for your brother's murder,
 There was a friendship 'twixt us ; and tho' then
 I left his barren soil, to root myself
 More safely under your auspicious shade,
 Yet still pretending ties of ancient love,
 At his arrival here I'll visit him :
 Whence this advantage may at least be made,
 To ford his shallow soul.

Mir. Oh much, much more ;
 'Twas happily remember'd : nothing gulls
 These open unsuspecting fools, like friendship :
 Dull heavy things ! Whom nature has left honest
 In mere frugality, to save the charge
 She's at in setting out a thinking soul :
 Who, since their own short understandings reach
 No further than the present, think ev'n the wife,
 Like them, disclose the secrets of their breasts,
 Speak what they think, and tell tales of themselves.
 Thy function too will varnish o'er our arts,
 And sanctify dissembling.

Mag. Yet still, I doubt,
 His caution may draw back, and fear a snare.

Mir. Tell him, the better to assist the fraud,
 That ev'n I wish his friendship, and would gladly
 Forget that cause of hate, which long has held us
 At mortal distance, give up my revenge,
 A grateful off'ring to the public peace.

Mag. Could you afford him such a bribe as that,
 A brother's blood yet unaton'd ?

Mir. No, *Magas*,
 It is not in the power of fate to raze
 That thought from out my memory :

Eternal

Eternal night, 'tis true, may cast a shade
 On all my faculties, extinguish knowledge,
 And great revenge may with my being cease;
 But whilst I am, that ever will remain,
 And in my latest spirits still survive.
 Yet I would have thee promise that, and more;
 The friendship of the Queen, the restitution
 Of his command, and honours, that his daughter
 Shall be the bride of *Artaban*; say any thing:
 Thou know'st the faith of courtiers, and their oaths,
 Like those of lovers, the Gods laugh at 'em.

Mag. Doubt not my zeal to serve our royal mistress,
 And in her interest yours, my friend and patron.

Mir. My worthy priest! Still be my friend, and share
 The utmost of my pow'r; by greatness rais'd,

[*Embracing.*

Thou, like the God thou serv'st, shalt shine aloft,
 And with thy influence rule the under world.
 But see! the Queen appears; she seems to muse,
 Her thoughtful soul labours with some event
 Of high import, which bustles like an embryo
 In its dark room, and longs to be disclos'd.
 Retire, lest we disturb her.

[*They retire to the side of the Stage.*
Enter the Queen attended.

Que. Be fix'd, my soul, fix'd on thy own firm basis!
 Be constant to thyself; nor know the weakness,
 The poor irresolution of my sex:
 Disdain those shews of danger, that would bar
 My way to glory. Ye diviner Pow'rs!
 By whom 'tis said we are, from whose bright beings
 These active sparks were struck which move our clay;
 I feel, and I confess th' ethereal energy,
 That busy restless principle, whose appetite
 Is only pleas'd with greatness like your own:
 Why have you clogg'd it then with this dull mass,
 And shut it up in woman? Why debas'd it
 To an inferior part of the creation?
 Since your own heavenly hands mistook my lot,
 'Tis you have err'd, not I. Could fate e'er mean
 Me for a wife, a slave to *Tiribafus*!
 To such a thing as he! a wretch! a husband!
 Therefore in just assertion of myself,

I shook

I shook him off, and pass'd those narrow limits,
Which laws contrive in vain for souls born great.
There is not, must not be a bound for greatness;
Pow'r gives a sanction, and makes all things just.
Ha! *Mirza*! Worthy Lord! I saw thee not,

[*Seeing Mirza.*]

So busy were my faculties in thought.

Mir. The thoughts of Princes dwell in sacred privacy,
Unknown and venerable to the vulgar; [*Bowing.*]
And like a temple's innermost recesses,
None enters to behold the hallow'd mysteries,
Unbidden of the God that dwells within.

Que. Wife *Mirza*! were my soul a temple, fit
For Gods and godlike counsels to inhabit,
Thee only would I chuse of all mankind,
To be the priest, still favour'd with access;
Whose piercing wit, sway'd by unerring judgment,
Might mingle even with assembled Gods,
When they devise unchangeable decrees,
And call 'em fate.

Mir. Whate'er I am, each faculty,
The utmost power of my exerted soul,
Preserves a being only for your service;
And when I am not yours, I am no more.

Que. Time shall not know an end of my acknow-
But every day of our continu'd lives [*ledgments;*]
Be witness of my gratitude, to draw
The knot, which holds our common interest, closer:
Within six days, my son, my *Artaban*,
Equally dear to me as life and glory,
In public shall espouse the fair *Cleone*,
And be my pledge of everlasting amity.

Mir. O royal lady! you outbid my service;
And all returns are vile, but words the poorest.

Que. Enough! be, as thou hast been, still my friend,
I ask no more. But I observe of late,
Your daughter grows a stranger to the court;
Know you the cause?

Mir. A melancholy girl;
Such in her infancy her temper was,
Soft even beyond her sex's tenderness;
By nature pitiful, and apt to grieve
For the mishaps of others, and so make

The

16 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

The sorrows of the wretched world her own :
Her closet and the Gods share all her time,
Except when (only by some maid attended)
She seeks some shady solitary grove,
Or by the gentle murmurs of some brook
Sits sadly listening to a tale of sorrow,
Till with her tears she swell the narrow stream.

Que. It is not well, these thoughts must be remov'd ;
That eating canker, grief, with wasteful spite,
Preys on the rosy bloom of youth and beauty :
But love shall chase away these clouds of sadness ;
My son shall breathe so warm a gale of sighs,
As shall dissolve those icicles that hang
Like death about her heart.

Attend us, holy *Magas*, to the King,
Nor cease to importune the mighty Gods
To grant him health, tho' much I fear in vain.

[*Exeunt Queen, Magas, and attendants.*]

Mir. This meddling priest longs to be found a fool :
Thinks he that *Memnon*, soldier as he is,
Thoughtless and dull, will listen to his soothing ?
Howe'er, I gave his wife proposal way,
Nay, urg'd him to go on ; the shallow fraud
Will ruin him for ever with my enemies,
And make him firmly mine, spite of his fears,
And natural inconstancy.
While choice remains, he will be still unsteady,
And nothing but necessity can fix him. [Exit.]

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and attendants.

Art. Methinks, my noble father and my friend,
We enter here like strangers, and unlook'd for :
Each busy face we meet, with wonder starts,
And seems amaz'd to see us.

Mem. Well may th' ignoble herd
Start, if with heedless steps they unawares
Tread on the lion's walk : a Prince's genius
Awe with superior greatness all beneath him.
With wonder they behold the great *Arfaces*
Reviv'd again in godlike *Artaxerxes*.
In you they see him, such as oft they did
Returning from his wars, and crown'd with conquest,
When all our virgins met him on the way,
And with their songs and dances blest his triumph :

Now

Now basely aw'd by factious priests and women,
 They start at majesty, and seem surpriz'd,
 As if a God had met 'em. In honour's name,
 Why have we let this be? why have we languish'd,
 And suffer'd such a government as this
 To waste our strength, and wear our empire low!

Art. Curst be the means by which these ills arose,
 Fatal alike to me as to my country;
 Which my great soul, unable to revenge,
 Has yet with indignation only seen,
 Cut off by arts of coward priests and statesmen,
 Whom I disdain'd with servile smiles to court,
 From the great right which God and nature gave,
 My birthright to a throne.

Mem. Nor priests, nor statesmen,
 Could have compleated such an ill as that,
 If women had not mingled in the mischief;
 If *Artemisa* had not, by her charms,
 And all her sex's cunning, wrought the King,
 Old, obvious to her arts, decay'd in greatness,
 Dead to the memory of what once he was,
 Just crawling on the verge of wretched life,
 A burden to himself, and his friends pity,
 Among his other failings, to forget
 All that a father and a King could owe
 To such a son as you were; to cut you off
 From your succession, from your hopes of empire,
 And graft her upstart offspring on to royalty.

Art. But if I bear it,
 Oh may I live to be my brother's slave,
 The scorn of those brave friends that own my cause;
 May you, my father, spurn me for a coward,
 May all my noble hopes of love and glory
 Leave me to vile despair. By Heaven, my heart
 Sits lighter in my bosom, when I think
 That I this day shall meet the boy my brother,
 Whose young ambition with aspiring wings
 Dares ev'n to mate my greatness.

Mem. Fame, that speaks
 Minutely every circumstance of Princes,
 Describes him bold, and fiercely fond of power,
 Which ev'n in spite of nature he affects;
 Impatient of command, and hardly deigning

To be controul'd by his imperious mother.
 'Tis said too (as no means were left untry'd,
 Which might prepare and fit him to contend
 With a superior right of birth and merit)
 That books, and the politer arts (which those
 Who know admire) have been his care; already
 He mingles in their councils, and they trust
 His youth with secrets of important villany.
 The crowd, taught by his creatures to admire him,
 Style him a God in wisdom.

Art. Be that his glory:

Let him with pedants hunt for praise in books,
 Pore out his life amongst the lazy gown-men,
 Grow old and vainly proud in fancy'd knowledge,
 Unequal to the task of vast ambition:
 Ambition! the desire of active souls,
 That pushes 'em beyond the bounds of nature,
 And elevates the hero to the Gods.
 But see! my love, your beauteous daughter comes,
 And ev'n ambition sickens at her sight.

Enter Amestris attended.

Revenge, and fierce desires of glory, cease
 To urge my passions, master'd by her eyes;
 And only gentle fires now warm my breast.

Ame. I come, my father, to attend your order.

[*To Memnon.*

Mem. 'Tis well; and I would have thee still be near
 The malice of the faction which I hate, [*me.*
 Would vent itself ev'n on thy innocence,
 Wert thou not safe under a father's care.

Art. Oh say a lover's too; nor can you have
 An interest in her safety more than mine.
 Love gives a right superior ev'n to nature;
 Or love is nature in the noblest meaning,
 The cause and the preserver of the world.
 These arms, that long to press thee to my bosom,
 For ever shall defend thee.

Mem. Therefore, my son,
 Unto your care I leave our common charge;
Tigranes with our friends expects my orders:
 Those when I have dispatch'd, upon the instant
 I will return, and meet at your apartment.

[*Exit Memnon.*

Art.

Art. Come to my arms, and let me hide thee there
From all those fears that vex thy beating heart;
Be safe and free from all those fancy'd dangers,
That haunt thy apprehension.

Ame. Can you blame me,
If from retirement drawn, and pleasing solitude,
I fear to tempt this stormy sea the world,
Whose ev'ry beach is strew'd with wrecks of wretches
That daily perish in it? Curst ambition!
Why dost thou come to trouble my repose,
Who have ev'n from my infancy disclaim'd thee?

Art. Cease to complain, my love, and let no thought,
But what brings peace and joy, approach thy breast.
Let me impart my manly fires to thee,
To warm thy fancy to a taste of glory;
Imperial power and purple greatness wait thee,
And sue for thy acceptance: by the sun,
And by *Arsaces'* head, I will not mount
The throne of *Cyrus*, but to share it with thee.

Ame. Vain shews of happiness! Deceitful pageantry!
Ah! Prince, hadst thou but known the joys which dwell
With humbler fortunes, thou wouldst curse thy royalty.
Had fate allotted us some obscure village,
Where only blest with life's necessities,
We might have pass'd in peace our happy days,
Free from the cares which crowns and empires bring;
There no step-mother, no ambitious brother,
No wicked statesman, would with impious arts
Have strove to wrest from us our small inheritance,
Or stir the simple hinds to noisy faction:
Our nights had all been blest with balmy slumbers,
And all our waking hours been crown'd with love.

Art. Exquisite charmer! now by *Oresmades*
I swear, thy each soft accent melts my soul:
The joy of conquest, and immortal triumph,
Honour and greatness, all that fires the hero
To high exploits, and everlasting fame,
Grows vile in sight of thee. My haughty soul,
By nature fierce, and panting after glory,
Could be content to live obscure with thee,
Forgotten and unknown of all but my *Amestris*.

Ame. No, son of great *Arsaces*, tho' my soul
Shares in my sex's weakness, and would fly

From

20 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

From noise and faction, and from fatal greatness;
Yet for thy sake, thou idol of my heart,
(Nor will I blush to own the sacred flame,
Thy sighs and vows have kindled in my breast)
For thy lov'd sake, spite of my boding fears,
I'll meet the danger which ambition brings,
And tread one path with thee: Nor shalt thou lose
The glorious portion which thy fate designs thee,
For thy *Amestris*' fears.

Art. Give me those fears;
For all things will be well.

Ame. Grant it, ye Powers:
This day before your altars will I kneel,
Where all my vows shall for my Prince be offer'd;
Still let success attend him, let mankind
Adore in him your visible divinity;
Nor will I importune you for myself,
But sum up all I ask in *Artaxerxes*.

Art. And doubt not but the Gods will kindly hear
Their virgin votary, and grant her pray'r;
Our glorious sun, the source of light and heat,
Whose influence cheers the world he did create,
Shall smile on thee from his meridian skies,
And own the kindred beauties of thy eyes;
Thy eyes, which, could his own fair beams decay,
Might shine for him, and bless the world with day.

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE, *An Appartment of the Palace.*

Enter Memnon and Magas,

Mem. **T**HOSE who are wise in courts, my holy sir,
Make friendships with the ministers of
Nor seek the ruins of a wretched exile, [state,
Lest there should be contagion in misfortunes,
And make th' alliance fatal.

Mag. Friends like *Memnon*
Are worth being sought in danger: since this age,

Of

Of most flagitious note, degenerates
 From the fam'd virtue of our ancestors,
 And leaves but few examples of their excellence,
 Whom should we seek for friendships but those few,
 Those happy few, within whose breasts alone
 The footsteps of lost virtue yet remain?

Mem. I prithee peace; for nothing misbecomes
 The man that would be thought a friend, like flattery;
 Flattery! the meanest kind of base dissembling,
 And only us'd to catch the grossest fools:
 Besides, it stains the honour of thy function,
 Which, like the Gods thou serv'st, should be sincere.

Mag. By that sincerity, by all the service
 My friendship can express, I would approve it;
 And tho' I went not from *Persepolis*
 Companion of your exile, yet my heart
 Was with you still; and what I could I did,
 Beseeching ev'ry God for your return;
 Nor were those vows in vain, since once again
 'Tis giv'n me to behold my friend; nay more,
 Would you agree, to keep you here for ever.

Mem. The Gods, 'tis true, are just, and have, I hope,
 At length decreed an end to my misfortunes;
 At least they give me this, to die with honour,
 When life grows vile or burdensome.

Mag. By me they offer all that you can ask,
 And point an easy way to happiness.
 Spare them the wounds our wretched country fears,
 The thousand ills which civil discord brings.
 Oh still that noise of war, whose dread alarms
 Frighten repose from country villages,
 And stir rude tumult up, and wild distraction
 In all our peaceful cities.

Mem. Witness for me,
 Ye awful Gods, who view our inmost thoughts!
 I took not arms, till urg'd by self-defence,
 The eldest law of nature.
 Impute not then those ills which may ensue
 To me, but those who with incessant hate
 Pursue my life, whose malice spreads the flame
 To every part, that my devoted fabric
 May in the universal ruin burn.

Mag. And yet ev'n there perhaps you judge too rashly,
 im-

impetuous passion hurries you so fast,
You cannot mark th' advantage of your fortune.

Mem. Has not the law been urg'd to set a brand
Of foul dishonour on my hoary head?

Ah! Am I not proscrib'd?

Mag. Forget that thought,
That jarring grates your soul, and turns the harmony
Of blessed peace to curst infernal discord.
Hate and its fatal causes all shall cease,
And *Memnon*'s name be honour'd as of old,
The bravest and the most successful warrior,
The fortunate defender of his country.

Mem. 'Tis true (nor will it seem a boast to own)
I have fought well for *Persia*, and repay'd
The benefit of birth with honest service;
Full fifty years harness'd in rugged steel,
I have endur'd the biting winter's blast,
And the severer heats of parching summer:
While they who loll'd at home on lazy couches
Amidst a crew of harlots and soft eunuchs,
Were at my cost secure in luxury:
This is a justice *Mirza*'s self must do me.

Mag. Even he, tho' fatal accidents have set
A most unhappy bar between your friendship,
Lamenting that there had been cause of enmity,
And owning all the merit of your virtues,
Will often wish fate had ordain'd you friends.

Mem. Our God, the sun, shall sooner change his
And all th' impossibilities, which poets [course,
Count to extravagance of loose description,
Shall sooner be.

Mag. Yet hear me, noble *Memnon*:
When by the duty of my priesthood mov'd,
And in just detestation of the mischiefs
Intestine jars produce, I urg'd wise *Mirza*,
By his concurrence, help, and healing counsel,
To stop those wounds at which his country bleeds;
Griev'd at the thought, he vow'd his whole endeavour
Should be to close those breaches:
That ev'n *Cleander*'s death, and all those quarrels
That long have nourish'd hatred in your houses,
Should be in joy of public peace forgotten.

Mem. Oh couldst thou charm the malice of a statesman,
And

And make him quit his purpose of revenge,
Thy preaching might reform the guilty world,
And vice would be no more.

Mag. Nay, ev'n the Queen
Will bind the confirmation by her son,
And asks the fair *Amesiris* for Prince *Artaban*.

Mem. Were that the only terms, it were impossible.

Mag. You would not shun th' alliance of a Prince?

Mem. No; for it is the glory of my fate,
That *Artaxerxes* is design'd my son,
With ev'ry grace and royal virtue crown'd;
Great, just, and merciful, such as mankind
(When, in the infant world, first governments
Began by choice) would have design'd a King.

Mag. Unbounded pow'r, and height of greatness
To Kings that lustre, which we think divine; [give
The wise, who know 'em, know they are but men,
Nay, sometimes weak ones too: the crowd indeed,
Who kneel before the image, not the God,
Worship the deity their hands have made.
The name of *Artaban* will be as great
As that of *Cyrus*, when he shall possess
(As sure he shall) his throne.

Mem. Ha! What means he?
This villain priest! But hold my rage a little,
And learn dissimulation: I'll try him further. [*Aside.*
You talk in riddles, when you name a throne,
And *Artaban*; the Gods who portion out
The lots of Princes as of private men,
Have put a bar between his hopes and empire.

Mag. What bar?

Mem. The best, an elder brother's claim.

Mag. That's easily remov'd; the King their father,
On just and weighty reasons, has decreed
His scepter to the younger; add to this,
The joint concurrence of our *Persian* Lords,
Who only want your voice to make it firm.

Mem. Can I, can they, can any honest hand,
Join in an act like this? Is not the elder
By nature pointed out for preference?
Is not his right enroll'd among those laws
Which keeps the world's vast frame in beauteous order:
Ask those thou nam'st but now, what made them Lords?

Wha

What titles had they had, if merit only
 Could have conferr'd a right; if nature had not
 Strove hard to thrust the worst-deserving first,
 And stamp'd the noble mark of eldership
 Upon their baser metal?

Mag. Sure there may be
 Reasons of so much pow'r and cogent force,
 As may ev'n set aside this right of birth;
 If sons have rights, yet fathers have 'em too.
 'Twere an invidious task to enter into
 The insolence, and other faults, which mov'd
 Royal *Asfages* to a just displeasure
 Against his eldest son, Prince *Artaxerxes*.

Mem. Ha! dare not for thy life, I charge thee dare
 To brand the spotless virtue of my Prince [not
 With falsehoods of most base and damn'd contrivance.
 I tell thee, envious priest, should the just Gods
 Require severe account of thy past life,
 And charge remembrance to dispose thy crimes,
 In rank and hideous order to thy view,
 Horror and guilt of soul would make thee mad,

Mag. You take the matter further than I meant it.
 My friendship only aims at your advantage,
 Would point you out a way to peace and honour,
 And in return of this, your rage unkindly
 Loads me with injuries.

Mem. Away! I cannot bear thy base dissembling.
 My honest soul disdains thee and thy friendship.
 How hast thou dar'd to think so vilely of me,
 That I would condescend to thy mean arts,
 And traffick with thee for a Prince's ruin?
 A Prince the joy and honour of mankind,
 As much superior to the rest of Kings,
 As they themselves are above common men;
 And is the very image of the Gods.
 Wer't thou not privileg'd like age and women;
 My sword should reach thee, and revenge the wrong
 Thy tongue has done his fame.

Mag. Ungrateful Lord!
 Would'st thou invade my life, as a return
 For proffer'd love? But let th' event declare
 How great a good by me sincerely offer'd,
 Thy dull romantic honour has refus'd.

And

And since I have discharg'd the debt I ow'd
To former friendship, if the Gods hereafter
Send ruin down, and plague thee with confusion,
Remember me in vain, and curse thy folly.

[Exit Magas.]

Mem. No, my remembrance treasures honest thoughts,
And holds not things like thee; I scorn thy friendship,
And would not owe my life to such a villain:
But thou art hardly saint enough to prophesy.
Were all thy tribe like thee, it might well startle
Our lay unlearned faith, when through such hands
The knowledge of the Gods is reach'd to man.
But thus those Gods instruct us, that not all
(Who like intruders thrust into their service,
And turn the holy office to a trade)
Participate their sacred influence.
This then is your own cause; ye awful powers,
Revenge yourselves, your violated altars,
That those who with unhallow'd hands approach,
May tremble at your justice.

[Exit.]

SCENE, *The Palace.*

Enter the Queen, Artaban, Mirza, Magas, and attendants.

Art. MY brother then is come!

Mir. My Lord, I saw him,
With him old haughty *Memnon*; as they pass'd,
With fierce disdain they view'd the gazing crowd,
And with dumb pride seem'd to neglect that worship
Which yet they wish'd to find: this way they move,
'Tis said to ask an audience of the King.

Que. *Mirza*, 'tis well, I thank thy timely care;
Here will we face this storm of insolence,
Nor fear the noisy thunder, let it roll,
Then burst, and spend at once its idle rage.

Art. Why meet we thus like wrangling advocates,
To urge the justice of our cause with words?
I hate this parle, 'tis tame: if we must meet,
Give me my arms, and let us stake at once
Our rights of merit and of eldership,
And prove like men our title.

VOL. I.

C

Mir.

Mir. 'Twere unsafe,
They come furrounded by a crowd of friends:
To strike thro' these were dangerous and rash.
Fate waits for them elsewhere with certain ruin;
From *Mirza's* hand expect it.

Que. Be it so:
Auspicious sage, I trust thee with my fortune,
My hopes of greatness, do thou guide 'em all,
For me and for thyself. My son, give way,
Nor let thy hasty youth disturb with outrage
The present necessary face of peace;
Occasions great and glorious will remain
Worthy thy arms and courage.

Art. I obey,
And willingly resign th' unmanly task;
Words are indeed your province.

Mir. My royal mistress,
Prepare to meet with more than brutal fury
From the fierce Prince and *Memnon*.

Que. Well I know
The insolence and native pride of each,
With scurrile taunts and blackest infamy
They load my name: But let the wretches rail,
A woman's vengeance waits, 'em.

Mir. They are here.

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and attendants.

Artax. Ye tutelär Gods, who guard this royal fabric,
And thou, O *Orosmales*, the protector
Of the great *Persian* race, e'er yet my father,
Royal *Asfages*, mingle with your godheads,
Grant me once more to lay before his feet
His eldest born, his once lov'd *Artaxerxes*,
To offer my obedience to his age;
All that a son can owe to such a father,
You, who with haggard eyes stare wildly on me,
If (as by your attendance here you seem)
You serve the King, my father, lead me to him.

Que. And dost thou wonder that mankind should stare,
When parricides and rebels, in despite
Of nature, majesty, and reverend age,
With impious force and ruffian violence,
Would rob a King and father of his life;
Cut off his short remains? —

Artax.

Arta. Ha! say'st thou, woman?

I prithee peace, and urge not a reply;
I would not hold acquaintance with thy infamy.

Que. Ye righteous pow'rs, whose justice awes the world,
Let not your thunders sleep when crimes like these
Stalk in the open air.

Arta. Thy priest instructs thee,
Else sure thou hadst not dar'd to tempt the Gods,
And trifle with their justice; canst thou name it,
And look on me? on me, whom thy curst arts
Have strove to bar from native right to empire,
Made me a stranger to a father's love,
And broke the bands of nature, which once held me
The nearest to his heart?

Que. Had he not reason,
When thou with rebel insolence didst dare
To own and to protect that hoary ruffian;
[Pointing to Memnon.
And in despite ev'n of thy father's justice,
To stir the factious rabble up to arms
For him; and make a murder's cause thy own?

Mem. I had another name (nor shouldst thou move me,
Insulting Queen, to words, did not remembrance
With horror sting my soul for *Tiribasus*,
Thy murder'd Lord) when by my fatal orders,
And by his own high courage urg'd, he fell,
To make thy way to guilty greatness easy.
I thought him then a traitor (for thy arts
Had taught the royal mandate so to call him)
Too big for public justice, and on that pretence
Consented to the snare that catch'd his life;
So my obedient honesty was made
The pander to thy lust and black ambition.
Except the guilt of that accursed day,
In all my iron years of wars and danger,
From blooming youth down to decaying age,
My fame ne'er knew a stain of foul dishonour;
And if that makes me guilty, think what thou art,
The cause and the contriver of that mischief.

Que. What nam'st thou *Tiribasus*! be his guilt
Forgotten with his memory. Think on *Cleander*,
And let the furies that enquire for blood,
Stir horror up, and bitterest remorse,

28 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

To gnaw thy anxious soul. Oh great *Cleander* !
Unworthy was thy fate, thou first of warriors,
To fall beneath a base assassin's stab,
Whom all the thirsty instruments of death
Had in the field of battle fought in vain.

Mem. In fight of Heaven, and of the equal Gods,
I will avow that my revenge was just ;
My injur'd honour could not ask for less :
Since he refus'd to do a soldier's justice,
I us'd him as I ought.

Que. Amazing boldness !
And dar'st thou call that act a soldier's justice ?
Did'st thou not meet him with dissembled friendship,
Hiding the rancour of thy heart in smiles ?
When he (whose open unsuspecting nature
Thought thee a soldier honest as himself)
Came to the banquet as secure of peace,
By mutual vows renew'd ; and in the revel
Of that luxurious day, forgetting hate,
And every cause of ancient animosity,
Devoted all his thoughts to mirth and friendship :
Then *Memnon* (at an hour when few are villains,
The sprightly juice, infusing gentle thoughts,
And kindling love ev'n in the coldest breasts)
Unequal to him in the face of war,
Stole on *Cleander* with a coward's malice,
And struck him to the heart.

Mem. By the stern God,
By *Mars*, the patron of my honour'd wars,
'Tis basely false. In his own drunken brawl
The boaster fell. I bore his lavish tongue,
Nor thought him worth my sword, 'till (his cold temper
Warm'd with the wine) he dar'd me to the combat ;
Then pleas'd to meet him in that fit of valour,
I took him at his word, and (with my sword
Drawn against his in equal opposition)
I kill'd him while it lasted.

Arta. Cease we, my friend,
This womens' war of railing ; when they talk,
Men should be still, and let noise tire itself,
I came to find a father, tho' my fears
Suggest the worst of evils to my thoughts,
And make me dread to hear *Arfaces*' fate :

Lead

Lead, *Memnon*, to the presence.

Que. Prince, you pass not;
Guards, keep the door; the King your father lives --

Arta. Ha! if he lives, why lives he not to me?
Why am I thus shut out and banish'd from him?
Why are my veins rich with his royal blood?
Why did he give me life, if not to serve him?
Forbid me not to wait upon his bed,
And watch his sickly slumbers, that my youth
May with its service glad his drooping age,
And his cold hand may bless me ere he die.
Nay, be a Queen, and rob me of his crown,
But let me keep my right to filial piety.

Que. Well hast thou urg'd the specious name of duty,
To hide deform'd rebellion: Hast thou not
With thy false arts poison'd his people's loyalty?
What meant thy pompous progress thro' the empire?
Thy vast profusion to the factious nobles,
Whose interest sways the crowd, and stirs up mutiny?
Why did thy haughty, fierce, disdainful soul
Stoop to the meanest arts which catch the vulgar?
Herd with 'em, fawn upon 'em, and caress 'em?
Appeal to them, to them relate thy wrongs,
And make them judges of thy father's justice?
Thy cruel and unnatural lust of power
Has sunk thy father more than all his years,
And made him wither in a green old age.

Arta. False all as hell: Nor had I arm'd my friends
But to defend that right --

Que. Dost thou not come,
Impatient of delay, to hasten fate?
To bring that death, the lingering disease
Would only for a day or two defer?

Arta. I hear thee, and disdain thy little malice,
That dares to stain my virtue with a crime
It views with most abhorrence; but reproach
Is lost on thee, since modesty, with all
The virtues that adorn thy sex, is fled.

Que. Audacious Rebel!

Arta. Infamous adulteress!
Stain of my father's bed, and of his throne!

Art. Villain thou ly'st. Oh Madam, give me way,
[To the Queen, who holds him, drawing his sword.
Whatever bars my fury calls me base,

Unworthy of the honour of your son.

Que. Hold, *Artaban*; my honour suffers not
From his lewd breath, nor shall thy sword profane
With brawls of blood the reverence of this place
To peace and sacred Majesty devoted.

Arta. Ha! Who art thou?

Art. The son of great *Arfaces*.

Arta. No, 'tis false; thy forging mother's damn'd
contrivance. [*Pointing to Mirza.*]

Seek for thy father in that plotting fellow,
'The hero's race disclaims thee. Why dost thou frown.
And knit thy boyish brow? Dost thou dare ought
Worthy the rank of the divine *Arfaces*?
If so, come forth, break from that woman's arms,
And meet me with thy good sword like a man.

Art. Yes, *Artaxerxes*, yes; thou shalt be met:
The mighty Gods have held us in the balance,
And one of us is doom'd to sink for ever,
Nor can I bear a long delay of fate,
But wish the great decision were ev'n now:
Proud and ambitious Prince, I dare like thee
All that is great and glorious. Like thine,
Immortal thirst of empire fires my soul;
My soul, which of superior power impatient,
Disdains thy eldership; therefore in arms
(Which gives the noblest right to Kings) I will
To death dispute with thee the throne of *Cyrus*,

Arta. Do this, and thou art worthy of my anger;
O energy divine of great ambition,
That can inform the souls of beardless boys,
And ripen 'em to men in spite of nature!
I tell thee, boy, that empire is a cause,
For which the Gods might wage immortal war.
Then let my soul exert her utmost virtue,
And think at least thou art *Arfaces*' son,
That the idea of thy fancy'd father
May raise and animate thy lesser genius,
And make thee fit to meet my arm in battle.

Art. Oh doubt not but my soul is charm'd with great-
So much it rivals ev'n the joy of knowledge [*ness,*]
And sacred wisdom. What makes Gods divine,
But power and science infinite?
Hear only this; our father press'd by age,

And

And a long train of evils which that brings,
Languishes in the last extremes of life :
Since thou wouldst blot my birth with base dishonour,
Be this my proof of filial piety,
While yet he lives, cease we our enmity ;
Nor let the hideous noise of war disturb
His parting soul.

Artax. I take thee at thy word :
Let his remains of life be peace betwixt us,
And after that let all our time be war.
Remember when we meet, since one must fall,
Who conquers and survives, survives to empire.
[*Exeunt severally, Queen and Artax.* Artax. Mem.
[*cum suis.*

Mir. Most fortunate event ! which gives us more
Than ev'n our wishes could have ask'd. This truce
Gives lucky opportunity for thinking ;
'Twill lull these thoughtless heroes to security.

Mag. Th' approaching festival will more confirm it :
Of all those sacred times which heretofore
Religion has distinguish'd from the rest,
And to the service of the Gods devoted,
This has been still most venerable held.
Among the vulgar, toil and labour ceases,
With chaplets crown'd they dance to the shrill pipe,
And in their songs invoke those milder deities,
That soften anxious life with peace and pleasure ;
Slaves are enfranchis'd, and inveterate foes
Forget, or at the least suspend their hate,
And meet like friends. Pernicious discord seems
Out-rooted from our more than iron age :
The Gods are worship'd with unusual reverence,
Since none, not ev'n our Kings, approach their temples
With any mark of war's destructive rage,
But sacrifice unarm'd.

Mir. A lucky thought
Is in my mind at once compleatly form'd.
Like *Grecian Pallas* in the head of *Jove*.
When *Memnon*, *Artaxerxes*, and their friends,
Shall, in obedience to the holy rites,
To-morrow at the altars bow unarm'd,
Orchanes with a party of the guards,
Who in my palace shall this night be plac'd,

May at that private door which opens into
The temple, rush at once, and seize 'em all.
The heads once safe, the mean and heartless crowd
With ease may be dispers'd.

Mag. What you propose
Wears a successful face, were it as innocent :
An act of such outrageous profanation,
May shock the thoughts ev'n of our closest friends,
And make 'em start from an abhorr'd alliance,
That draws the vengeance of the Gods upon 'em.

Mir. Art thou the first to start a doubt like that ?
Art thou (who dost inspire their oracles,
And teach 'em to deceive the easy crowd
In doubtful phrase) afraid of thy own Gods ?
In every change they were on thy side still,
And sure they will not leave thee now for trifles.
The Gods shall certainly befriend our cause,
At least not be our foes, nor will they leave
Their happy seats (where free from care and pain,
Bless'd of themselves alone, of man regardless,
They loll serene in everlasting ease)
To mind the trivial business of our world.

Mag. But more I fear the superstitious vulgar,
Who tho' unknowing what religion means,
Yet nothing moves 'em more than zealous rage
For its defence, when they believe it violated.

Mir. I was to blame to tax the priest with scruples,
Or think his care of interest was his conscience. [*Aside.*
My caution shall obviate all thy fears ;
We will give out that they themselves design'd
To fire the temple, and then kill the King.
No matter, tho' it seem'd not very probable ;
More monstrous tales have oft amused the vulgar.

Mag. I yield to your direction ; and to strengthen
The enterprize, will secretly dispose
A party of my own within the temple,
'To join with yours.

Mir. It joys my heart to think
That I shall glut my vengeance on this *Memnon* ;
That I shall see him strive in vain, and curse
The happy fraud that caught him. Like a lion,
Who long has reign'd the terror of the woods,
And dar'd the boldest huntsmen to the combat ;
'Till catch'd at length within some hidden snare,

With

With foaming jaws he bites the toils that hold him,
 And roars, and rolls his fiery eyes in vain,
 While the surrounding swains at pleasure wound him,
 And make his death their sport :
 Thus wit still gets the mastery over courage.
 Long time unmatch'd in war the hero shone,
 And mighty fame in fields of battle won ;
 Till one fine project of the statesman's brain,
 Bereaves him of the spoils his arms did gain,
 And renders all his boasted prowess vain.

[*Exeunt*]

End of the Second Act.

A C T III.

SCENE, *A Garden belonging to Mirza's Palace.*

Cleone is discovered lying on a bank of flowers, Beliza attending.

S O N G.

UPON a shady bank repos'd,
 Philanthe, amorous, young, and fair,
 Sighing to the groves disclos'd
 The story of her care.
 The vocal groves give some relief,
 While they her notes return ;
 The waters murmur o'er her grief,
 And Echo seems to mourn.
 A swain that heard the nymph complain,
 In pity of the fair,
 Thus kindly strove to cure her pain,
 And ease her mind of care.
 'Tis just that love should give you rest,
 From love your torments came ;
 Take that warm cordial to your breast,
 And meet a kinder flame.
 How wretched must the woman prove,
 (Beware, fair nymph, beware)
 Whose folly scorns another's love,
 And courts her own despair ?

C 5.

Cle.

34 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Cle. Oh love ! Thou bane of an unhappy maid !
Sill art thou busy at my panting heart ?
Still dost thou melt my soul with thy soft images,
And make my ruin pleasing ? Fondly I try,
By gales of sighs and floods of streaming tears,
To vent my sorrows, and assuage my passions :
Still fresh supplies renew th' exhausted stores.
Love reigns my tyrant, to himself alone
He vindicates the empire of my breast,
And banishes all thoughts of joy for ever.

Bel. Why are you still thus cruel to yourself ?
Why do you feed and cherish the disease,
That preys on your dear life ? How can you hope
To find a cure for love in solitude ?
Why rather choose you not to shine at court ?
And in a thousand gay diversions there,
To lose the memory of this wretched passion ?

Cle. Alas, *Beliza*, thou hast never known
The fatal power of a resistless love :
Like that avenging guilt that haunts the impious,
In vain we hope by flying to avoid it ;
In courts and temples it pursues us still,
And in the loudest clamours will be heard :
It grows a part of us, lives in our blood,
And every beating pulse proclaims its force.
Oh ! think not then that I can shun myself ;
The grave can only hide me from my sorrows.

Bel. Allow me then at least to share your griefs ;
Companions in misfortunes make 'em less ;
And I could suffer much to make you easy.

Cle. Sit by me, gentle maid, and while I tell
A wretched tale of unregarded love,
If thou in kind compassion of my woes,
Shall sigh or shed a tear for my mishap,
My grateful eyes shall pay it back with interest.
Help me to rail at my too easy heart,
That rashly entertained this fatal guest :
And you, my eyes, why were you still impatient
Of any other sight but *Artaxerxes* ?
Why did you make my woman's heart acquainted
With all the thousand graces and perfections,
That dress the lovely hero up for conquest ?

Bel. Had you oppos'd the passion in its infancy,

Ere

Ere time had given it strength, it might have dy'd.

Cle. That was the fatal error that undid me :
My virgin thoughts, and unexperienc'd innocence,
Found not the danger till it was too late.
And tho' when first I saw the charming Prince,
I felt a pleasing motion at my heart,
Short breathing sighs heav'd in my panting breast,
The mounting blood flush'd in my glowing face,
And dy'd my cheeks with more than usual blushes ;
I thought him, sure, the wonder of his kind,
And wish'd my fate had given me such a brother :
Yet knew not that I lov'd, but thought that all,
Like me, beheld and blest'd him for his excellence.

Bel. Sure never hopeless maid was curs'd before
With such a wretched passion ; all the Gods
Join to oppose your happiness ; 'tis said
This day the Prince shall wed the fair *Amestris*.

Cle. No, my *Beliza*, I have never known
The pleasing thoughts of hope : Certain despair
Was born at once, and with my love increas'd.

Bel. Think you the Prince has 'ere perceived your
thoughts ?

Cle. Forbid it, all ye chaster powers, that favour
The modesty and innocence of maids :
No, till my death, no other breast but thine
Shall e'er participate the fatal secret.
O could I think that he had ever known
My hidden flame, shame and confusion
Would force my virgin soul to leave her mansion,
And certain death ensue.
Thou nam'st the fair *Amestris*, didst thou not ?

Bel. Madam, I did.

Cle. I envy not her happiness ;
Tho' sure few of our sex are blest'd like her
In such a godlike Lord.
Would I had been a man !
With honour then I might have sought his friendship :
Perhaps from long experience of my faith,
He might have lov'd me better than the rest.
Amidst the dangers of the horrid war,
Still had I been the nearest to his side ;
In courts and triumphs still had shar'd his joys.
Or when the sportful chase had call'd us forth,

Together had we cheer'd our foaming steeds,
 Together press'd the savage o'er the plain :
 And when o'er-labour'd with the pleasing toil,
 Stretch'd on the verdant soil and slept together.
 But whither does my roving fancy wander ?
 These are the sick dreams of fantastick love.
 So in the calenture the seaman fancies
 Green fields and flow'ry meadows on the ocean,
 'Till leaping in, the wretch is lost for ever.

Bel. Try but the common remedies of love,
 And let a second flame expel the first.

Cle. Impossible ; as well thou may'st imagine,
 When thou complain'st of heat at scorching noon,
 Another sun shall rise to shine more kindly.
 Believe me, my *Beliza*, I am grown
 So fond of the delusion that has charm'd me,
 I hate the officious hand that offers cure.

Bel. Madam, Prince *Artaban* !

Cle. My cruel stars !
 Do you then envy me my very solitude ?
 But death, the wretch's only remedy,
 Shall hide me from your hated light for ever.

Enter Artaban.

Art. Ah, lovely mourner ! still, still wilt thou blast
 My eager love with un auspicious tears ?
 When at thy feet I kneel, and sue for pity,
 Or justly of thy cold regards complain,
 Still wilt thou only answer me with sighs ?

Cle. Alas ! my Lord, what answer can I give ?
 If still I entertain you with my grief,
 Pity the temper of a wretched maid,
 By nature sad, and born the child of sorrow :
 In vain you ask for happiness from me,
 Who want it for myself.

Art. Can blooming youth,
 And virgin innocence, that knows not guilt,
 Know any cause for grief ?

Cle. Do but survey
 The miserable state of human kind,
 Where wretches are the general increase,
 And tell me if there be not cause for grief.

Art. Such thoughts as these, my fair philosopher,
 Inhabit wrinkled cheeks and hollow eyes ;

. The

The marks which years set on the wither'd sage:
 The gentle goddess, nature, wisely has
 Allotted other cares for youth and beauty.
 The God of love stands ready with his torch
 To light it at thy eyes, but still in vain,
 For ere the flame can catch, 'tis drown'd in tears.

Cle. Oh! name not love, the worst of all misfortunes,
 The common ruin of my easy sex,
 Which I have sworn for ever to avoid,
 In memory of all those hapless maids,
 That love has plung'd in unexampled woes.

Art. Forbear to argue with that angel face,
 Against the passion thou wert form'd to raise.
 Alas! thy frozen heart has only known
 Love in reverse, not tasted of its joys;
 The wishes, soft desires, and pleasing pains,
 That center all in most extatic bliss.
 Oh, lovely maid, mispend no more that treasure
 Of youth and charms, which lavish nature gives;
 The *Paphian* goddess frowns at thy delay;
 By her fair self, and by her son she swears,
 Thy beauties are devoted to her service.
 Lo! now she shoots her fires into my breast,
 She urges my desires, and bids me seize thee,

[*Taking her hand and kissing it.*]

And bear thee as a victim to her altar:
 Then offer up ten thousand thousand joys,
 As an amends for all thy former coldness.

Cle. Forbear, my Lord; or I must swear to fly
 For ever from your sight.

Art. Why dost thou frown?
 And damp the rising joy within my breast?
 Art thou resolv'd to force thy gentle nature,
 Compassionate to all the world beside,
 And only to me cruel? Shall my vows,
 Thy father's intercession, all be vain?

Cle. Why do you urge my father's fatal power,
 To curse you with a sad unlucky bride?
 Cast round your eyes on our gay Eastern courts,
 Where smiling beauties, born to better fate,
 Give joy to the beholders:
 There bless some happy Princess with your vows,
 And leave the poor *Cleone* to her sorrows.

38 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Art. What Queens are those, of most celestial form,
Whose charms can drive thy image from my heart?
Oh were they cast in nature's fairest mold,
Brighter than *Cynthia's* shining train of stars,
Kind as the softest she that ever clasp'd
Her lover, when the bridal-night was past;
I swear I would prefer thee, O *Cleone*,
With all thy scorn and cold indifference,
Would choose to languish and to die for thee,
Much rather than be blest'd, and live for them.

Cle. Oh Prince! it is too much; nor am I worthy
The honour of your passion, since 'tis fix'd
By certain and unalterable fate,

That I can never yield you a return:
My thoughts are all to chaste *Diana* vow'd,
And I have sworn to die her virgin votary.

Art. Impossible! thou canst not give away
Mine and thy father's right, ev'n to the Gods:

Diana will disown th' unjust donation,
Nor favour such an injury to love.
To every power Divine I will appeal,
Nor shall thy beauty bribe 'em to be partial.
Their altars now expect us: Come, fair saint,
And if thou wilt abide their righteous doom,
Their justice must decree my happiness,
Reward my sufferings, and my flame approve,
For they themselves have felt the power of love.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *The Temple of the Sun.*

Enter Artaxerxes, Amestris, and attendants.

Arta. 'TIS done! 'Tis done! Oh let me find [some way
To tell the mighty joy that fills my
Left I grow mad with height of furious bliss. [breast,
The holy priest has ty'd the sacred knot,
And my *Amestris* now is all my own.
Oh thou soft charmer! thou excelling sweetness!
Why art thou not transported all like me?
I swear thou dost not love thy *Artaxerxes*,
If thou art calm in this excess of happiness.

Am.

Ame. Alas! my Lord, my panting heart yet trembles
In vast suspense between unruly joys
And chilling fears. Somewhat methinks there is
'That checks my soul, and says I was too bold
To quit the pleasures of my virgin state,
To barter 'em for cares and anxious love.

Arta. These are the fears which wait on every bride,
And only serve for preludes to her joys;
Short sighs, and all those motions of thy heart,
Are nature's call, and kindle warm desires.
Soon as the friendly goddess of the night
Shall draw her veil of darkness o'er thy blushes,
These little cold unnecessary doubts
Shall fly the circle of my folding arms:
And when I press thee trembling to my bosom,
Thou shalt confess (if there be room for words,
Or ev'n for thoughts) that all those thoughts are bliss.

Ame. Yet surely mine are more than common fears:
For, oh! my Prince, when my foreboding heart
Surveys th' uncertain state of human joys,
How secretly the malice of our fate
Unseen pursues, and often blasts our happiness
In full security; I justly dread,
Lest death or parting, or some unseen accident,
Much worse, if possible, than each of these,
Should curse us more than ever we were blest'd.

Arta. Doubt not the Gods, my fair, whose righteous
Shall favour and protect our virtuous loves. [power
If still thou apprehend'st approaching danger,
Let us make haste and snatch th' uncertain joy,
While fate is in our power.

Now let us start, and give a loose to love,
Feast ev'ry sense with most luxurious pleasure,
Improve our minutes, make 'em more than years,
Than ages, and ev'n live the life of Gods:
If after this, death or ill-fortune comes,
It cannot injure us, since we already
Have liv'd and been before-hand with our fate.

Ame. Oh! let me ease at once my tender heart,
And tell my dearest Lord my worst of fears;
There is an ill which more than death I dread:
Should you, by time and long fruition-fated,
Grow faithless, and forget the lost *Amestris*;

Forget

40 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Forget that everlasting truth you vow'd,
 Tho' sure I should not publicly complain,
 Nor to the Gods accuse my perjur'd Prince,
 Yet my soft soul would sink beneath the weight;
 I should grow mad, and curse my very being,
 And wish I ne'er had been, or not been lov'd. [us,

Arta. Dost thou? when every happier star shines for
 And with propitious influence gilds our fortune,
 Dost thou invent fantastic forms of danger,
 And fright thy soul with things that are impossible?
 Now by the potent God of love, I swear,
 I will have ample vengeance for thy doubts.
 My soft complaining fair, shalt thou not pay me
 In joys too fierce for thought, for these suspicions?
 The bands which hold our love are knit by fate,
 Nor shall decaying time and nature loose 'em.
 Beyond the limits of the silent grave,
 Love shall survive, immortal as our beings:
 And when at once we climb yon azure skies,
 We will be shown to all the blest above,
 For the most constant pair that e'er deserv'd
 To mingle with their stars.

Ame. 'Tis true, 'tis true;
 Nor ought I to suspect thee, O my hero!
 The Gods have form'd thee for the nearest pattern
 Of their own excellence and perfect truth.
 O let me sink upon thy gentle bosom,
 And, blushing, tell how greatly I am blest'd.
 Forgive me, modesty, if here I vow
 That all the pleasures of my virgin state
 Were poor and trifling to the present rapture:
 A gentle warmth invades my glowing breast,
 And while I fondly gaze upon thy face,
 Ev'n thought is lost in exquisite delight.

Arta. Oh thou delicious perfect angel woman!
 Thou art too much for mortal sense to bear:
 The vernal bloom and fragrancy of spices,
 Wafted by gentle winds, are not like thee.
 From thee, as from the *Cyprian* Queen of love,
 Ambrosial odors flow; my every faculty
 Is charm'd by thee, and drinks immortal pleasure.
 O glorious God of day, fly swiftly forward,
 And to thy sister's rule resign the world:

Nor

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 45

Nor haste to rise again, but let the night
Long bless me with her stay, that thy return
At morn may find me happiest of my kind..

Enter Memnon.

My father ! is there an increase of joy ?
What can ye give, ye Gods, to make it more ?
Mem. Ye blessings of my age ! whom when I view,
The memory of former woes is lost.

Oh Prince ! Well has this glorious day repay'd
My youth and blood spent in *Arfaces'* service.
Nor, had the Gods indulg'd my vainest wishes,
Durst I have ask'd for such a son as you are.
But I am roughly bred, in words unknowing,
Nor can I phrase my speech in apt expression,
To tell how much I love and honour you:
Might I but live to fight one battle for you,
Tho' with my life I bought the victory,
Tho' my old batter'd trunk were hew'd to pieces,
And scatter'd o'er the field, yet should I bless
My fate, and think my years wound up with honour.

Arta. Doubt not, my noble father, but ev'n yet
A large remain of glory is behind.
When civil discord shall be reconcil'd,
And all the noise of faction hush'd to peace,
Rough *Greece*, alike in arts and arms severe,
No more shall brand the *Persian* name with softness.
Athens and *Sparta* wondring, shall behold us,
Strict in our discipline, undaunted, patient
Of war's stern toil, and dread our hostile virtue.
Those stubborn commonwealths, that proudly dare
Disdain the glorious Monarchs of the *East*,
Shall pay their homage to the throne of *Cyrus*.
And when with laurels cover'd we return,
My love shall meet, and smiling bless our triumph,
While at her feet I lay the scepters of the world.

Mem. Oh glorious theme ! By Heav'n it fires my
And kindles youth again in my cold veins. [age,

Arta. Ha ! *Mirza* and the Queen ! retire my fair ;
Ungentle hate and brawling rage shall not
Disturb the peace, to which this happy day
Is doubly sacred. Forward, to the altar. [Exeunt.

Enter

42 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Enter at the other door, Queen, Mirza, and attendants.

Mir. All are dispos'd, and fate but waits our orders
For a deciding blow.

Que. Your caution was
Both wise and faithful, not to trust my son
Too rashly with a secret of this nature :
The youth, tho' great of soul, and fond of glory,
Yet leans to the fantastic rules of honour,
Would hesitate at such an act as this,
Tho' future empire should depend upon it.

Mir. When time shall add experience to that
knowledge,
With which his early youth is richly fraught,
He'll be convinc'd that only fools would lose
A crown for notionary principles.
Honour is the unthinking soldier's boast,
Whose dull head cannot reach those finer arts,
By which mankind is govern'd.

Que. And yet it gives a lustre to the great,
And makes the crowd adore 'em.

Mir. Your son shall reap
The whole advantage, while we bear the guilt :
You, Madam, when the sacred hymns are finish'd,
Must with the Prince retire ; our foes when seiz'd,
Within the temple may be best secur'd,
Till you dispose their fate.

Que. The rites attend us ; [*Solemn musick is heard.*]
This day my son is Monarch of the East.

Mir. Lend us, ye Gods, your temples but this day,
You shall be paid with ages of devotion,
And after this for ever undisturb'd,
Brood o'er your smoaking altars. [*Exeunt.*]

The Scene opening, shews the altar of the Sun, Magas, and several other priests attending. Solemn music is heard : then enter on one side Memnon, Artaxerxes, Amestris, and attendants ; on the other side the Queen, Mirza, Artaban, Cleone, Cleanthes, and attendants : they all bow towards the altar, and then range themselves on each side of the stage, while the following Hymn is perform'd in parts, and chorus by the priests.

H Y M N

HYMN to the Sun.

HAIL, light, that doubly glads our sphere,
 Glory and triumph of the year!
 Hail, festival, for ever blest,
 By the adoring ravish'd East!
 Hail, Mithras, mighty Deity!
 For fire and air, and earth and sea,
 From thee their origin derive,
 Motion and form from thee receive.
 When matter yet unacted lay,
 No sooner thou infus'd'st thy ray,
 But the dull mass its power obey'd,
 But an harmonious world was made.
 Which still, when thou withdraw'st thy beams,
 An undistinguish'd Chaos seems;
 For what are objects without sight?
 Or vision when involv'd in night?
 Night is an universal grave,
 Where things but doubtful beings have,
 Till them thy beams illuminate,
 And, as it were, again create.

Chorus, &c.

Hail, source of immaterial fire,
 That ne'er began, can ne'er expire;
 Whose orb, with streaming glories fraught,
 Dazzles the ken of human thought!
 All the dependant spheres above,
 By thy direction shine and move:
 All purer beings here below,
 From thy immediate essence flow.
 What is the soul of man, but light,
 Drawn down from thy transcendent height?
 What but an intellectual beam?
 A spark of thy immortal flame?
 For as thou rul'st with gladsome rays
 The greater world, so this the less;
 And like thy own diffusive soul,
 Shoots life and vigor thro' the whole.
 Since then from thee at first it came,
 To thee, tho' clogg'd, it points its flame;
 And conscious of superior birth,
 Despises this unkindred earth.

Chorus, &c.

Hail,

44 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

*Hail, Orosimades, pow'r divine !
 Permit us to approach thy shrine ;
 Permit thy votaries to raise
 Their grateful voices to thy praise.
 Thou art the father of our Kings,
 The stem whence their high lineage springs ;
 The sov'reign Lord that does maintain
 Their uncontroll'd and boundless reign.
 O then assist thy drooping son,
 Who long has grac'd our Persian throne !
 O may he yet extend his sway !
 We yet Arfaces' rule obey !
 Let thy vitality impart
 New spirits to his fainting heart ;
 Let him, like thee (from whom he sprung)
 Be ever active, ever young.
 Chorus, &c.*

*When the musick is ended, Memnon, Artaxerxes, &c.
 Queen, Artaban, &c. go off as they enter'd, severally,
 only Mirza comes forward, and the scene shuts ; he looks
 after Amestris going out, and then speaks.*

[breast ?

Mir. What means this foreign warmth within my
 Is this a time for any thought but vengeance ?
 That fatal beauty dazzles my weak sense,
 And blasts the resolution of my soul :
 My eyes in contradiction to my purpose,
 Still bent to her, and drunk the poison in ;
 While I stood stupid in suspense of thought,
 And now like oil my flaming spirits blaze ;
 My arteries, my heart, my brain is scorch'd,
 And I am all one fury. Feeble *Mirza* !
 Canst thou give way to dotage, and become
 The jest of fools ? No ! 'tis impossible :
 Revenge shall rouse, and with her iron whips
 Lash forth this lazy ague from my blood,
 This malady of girls. Remember, statesman,
 Thy fate and future fortunes now are forming,
 And summon all thy counsels to their aid,
 Ev'n thy whole soul. It wo't not be : *Amestris*
 Still rises uppermost in all my thoughts,
 The master-piece of nature. The boy God.

Laughs.

Laughs at my rage, and triumphs o'er my folly.

[*A tumultuous noise is heard.*]

Ha! by the Gods 'tis doing! Now, my stars,
Be kind, and make me matter of my wish at once.

Enter Magas.

But see, the priest—Why dost thou stare and tremble?
Have we succeeded? say; and ease my fears.

Mag. My soul is pierc'd with horror! Every God
Seems from his shrine to threaten us with vengeance.
The temple reels, and all its pond'rous roof
Nods at the profanation.

Mir. Base and fearful!

How can thy wretched soul conceive such monsters?
Canst thou, who wouldst be great, be superstitious?
But 'tis the coward's vice. Say, are our enemies secur'd?

Mag. They are; the Prince, old *Memnon*, and his
Are in *Orchanes'* hands, only *Tigranes* [daughter,
With some of lesser note are fled.

Mir. No matter:

These are the soul, the rest a lifeless mass,
Not worth our apprehension.

Mag. Will you stay,

To meet the furious thunder of their rage?

Mir. I will: Thou may'st retire, and summon back
Thy scatter'd spirits: Let not the crowd see
Thy fears; 'twill make thee vile and cheap among 'em.

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and Amestris, prisoners,
Orchanes and Guards.*

Arta. Slave! Villain! Answer, say how hast thou
To do this insolence? [dar'd

Orc. I know my orders,

Which from the Queen my mistress I receiv'd,
Who will avow her own authority.

Arta. Ha! from the Queen? She durst not, 'tis im-
'Tis sacrilege! 'tis treason! 'tis damnation! [possible!
Am I not *Artaxerxes*? Born to empire,
The next degree to Gods. O thou bright sun!
That roll'st above, the object of our worship,
Canst thou behold, and not avenge thy race?
Thy injur'd race? If I could ought admit
Unworthy of thy great original,
Let me be doom'd to fall this villain's slave.

If not, why am I made the scorn of wretches
 So much below me, that they hardly share
 The common privilege of kind ; but are
 As beasts to men —

Mem. See where the master villain stands ! Unmov'd
 And harden'd in impiety, he laughs
 At the fictitious justice of the Gods,
 And thinks their thunder has not wings to reach him.
 But know, the joy thy triumph brings is short :
 My fate (if the Gods govern) or at least,
 My mind's beyond thy reach, and scorns thy malice.

Mir. Dull valiant fool, thy ruin is the least,
 The most ignoble triumph of my wit.
Cleander's blood asks for substantial vengeance,
 And when the thought that labours in my breast
 Appears in action, thou shalt know the cause
 Why I remain to view thy hated face,
 That blasts me with its presence ; thou shalt know it,
 And curse thyself, curse the ill-omen'd day
 That gave thee birth ; renouncing all the Gods,
 Thyself of them renounc'd, shalt sink to hell
 In bitterest pangs, and mingle with the furies.

Mem. Unhallow'd dog, thou ly'st ! The utmost force
 Of all thy study'd malice cannot move me :
 And if the Gods in trial of my virtue,
 Can yield my life up to thy hangman's mercy,
 I'll shew thee with what ease the brave and honest
 Can put off life, till thou shalt damn thy arts,
 Thy wretched arts, and impotence of malice.

Mir. Rest well assur'd, thou shalt have cause to try
 Thy philosophic force of passive virtue.

Arta. O death to greatness ! Can we fall so low,
 To be the slavish objects of his mirth ?
 Shall my just rage and violated honour
 Play the buffoon, and minister to laughter ?
 Down, down, my swelling heart, hide thy resentments,
 Nor prostitute the ruffled majesty
 Of injur'd Princes to the gazing crowd :
 My face shall learn to cover the emotion
 My wounded soul endures. Ha ! my *Amestris* !
 My love ! my royal bride ! the spoiler, grief,
 Defaces every feature : like the deluge
 That raz'd the beauties of the first creation :

I cannot

I cannot bear it : Villains, give me way.

[He breaks from the guards that hold him, and catches hold of Amestris.]

Oh! let me hold thee in my throbbing bosom,
And strive to hide thy sorrows from my sight :
I cannot see thy griefs ; and yet I want
The power to bring relief.

Ame. Ah! No, my Prince ;
There are no remedies for ills like ours ;
My helpless sex by nature stands expos'd
To all the wrongs and injuries of fortune ;
Defenceless in myself, you were my refuge,
You are my Lord ; to whom should I complain,
Since you cannot redress me ? Were you not
The honour, joy, and safety of *Amestris* ?
For you alone I liv'd, with you alone
I could be happy ; O my *Artaxerxes* !
One influence guides our consenting stars,
And still together we are bless'd or curs'd.

Mir. With a malignant joy my ears drink in
Her each harmonious accent, every glance
Goes to my heart, and stirs alternate motions
Of heat and cold ; a lazy pleasure now
Thrills all my veins, anon desire grows hot,
And my old sinews shrink before the flame. *[Aside.]*

Arta. Go on, and charm me with thy angel's voice,
Sooth and assuage the fury in my breast,
That urges me to unbecoming passion :
My rage grows cool amidst thy soft complainings ;
And tho' thou talk'st of woes, of death, and ruin,
'Tis Heaven to hear thee.

Ame. Since this is all our wretched consolation,
Let us indulge our grief, till by long use
It grows habitual, and we lose the pain.
Here on the marble pavement will we sit,
Thy head upon my breast ; and if remembrance
Of cruel wrongs shall vex thy noble heart,
The murmur of my sighs shall charm the tumult,
And fate shall find us calm : Nor will the Gods,
Who here inhabit and behold our sufferings,
Delay to end our woes in immortality *[Gods,]*

Arta. Ha! say'st thou? Gods! Yes certain there are
To whom my youth with reverence still has bow'd,
Whose

48 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Whose care and providence are virtue's guard;
Think then, my fair, they have not made us great,
And like themselves, for miserable ends.

Mir. Gods might behold her, and forget their wisdom.
[*Aside.*]

But I delay too long. *Orchanes*, lend thy ear.

[*Mirza whispers Orchanes, and exit.*]

Mem. My children! you were still my joy and hap—
Why am I made your curse? This hated head, [pinels:
To death devoted, has involv'd your innocence
In my destruction.

[*Guards lay hold on Artaxerxes and Amestris.*]

Ame. Alas! my father!

Arta. Barbarous dogs! What mean you?

Orc. Convey the lady to Lord *Mirza's* Palace,

'Tis the Queen's will she shall be there confin'd.

Arta. Thou canst not mean so damn'd a villany!

Thou dar'st not, shalt not part us: Fate cannot do it.

Mem. Cursed old-age! why have I liv'd to see this?

Orc. Force 'em asunder.

[*'em—*]

Arta. Hew off my limbs, ye dogs! I will not loose
Oh devils! death and furies! my wife! my lov'd

Amestris—

Ame. My Lord! my husband!—

*Orchanes and one party of the guards force Artaxerxes
and Memnon off one way, and the other party bears
Amestris another.*

Re-enter Mirza.

Mir. This was most noble mischief! it stung home,
'Twas luxury of vengeance—'twas not ill
To keep aloof: these boisterous beasts have paws,
And might have scratch'd: The wife should not allow
A possibility to fortune's malice.
Now to the rest; this Prince, this husband, dies:
To-morrow's dawn brings his and *Memnon's* fate.
This night let 'em despair, and ban, and rage,
And to the wooden deities within
Tell frantic tales: my hours shall pass more pleasingly
If love (which yet I know not) can give pleasure.
Love! what is love? the passion of a boy,
That spends his time in laziness and sonnets:
Lust is the appetite of man; and shall
Be sated, till it loath the cloying banquet.

The

The wife are privileg'd by human frailty
 To taste these pleasures, but not dwell upon 'em;
 They marr and dull the faculty of thinking :
 One night I safely may indulge in riot,
 'Tis politic lewdness, and assists my vengeance ;
 I will grow young, and surfeit on her charms,
 Her luscious sweets ; then rising from her arms,
 The nauseous, momentary joy forget,
 And be myself again ; again be wife and great. [*Exit.*]

A C T IV.

SCENE, *The Palace.**Enter Artaban and Cleanthes.*

Art. 'TIS base and impious ! Where are the ties
 Shall keep mankind in order, if religion
 And public faith be violated ? 'Tis an injury
 That beards both Gods and men, and dares their justice.

Cle. The fearful crowd already take th' alarm,
 Break off their solemn sports, their songs and dances,
 And wildly in tumultuous concert join ;
 Mischief and danger sit in ev'ry face,
 And while they dread the anger of the Gods,
 The wise, who know th' effects of popular fury,
 From them expect that vengeance which they fear.

Art. The sacred power of majesty, which should
 Forbid, owns and protects the violence.
 It must not, shall not be : Who steals a crown
 By arts like these, wears it unworthily.

Cle. The Queen, your mother, sir, she will expect
 You should approve that act her power has done.

Art. I'll meet her as I ought, and show myself
 Worthy the noble rivalship of empire.

Enter the Queen, Mirza, and attendants.

Que. My son, I come to joy you of a crown
 And glory certain now ; your fate at length
 Has master'd that malignant influence
 With which it struggled long : You are a King,
 The greatest that our *Eastern* world beholds ;
 And tho' my widow'd bed be cause for grief,
 Yet for thy sake, my son, I joy to say,
Arfaces is no more.

Art. 'Twere vain and foolish
 To mourn his death with ceremonious sorrow;
 For tho' he died the greatest of our race,
 Yet since decaying age had sunk him low,
 And all the native majesty was lost,
 'Twas time the soul should seek for immortality,
 And leave the weary body to enjoy
 An honourable rest from care and sickness:
 Peace to his ashes, and eternal fame
 Dwell with his memory; while we who live
 Look back with emulation on his greatness,
 And with labourious steps strive to ascend
 That height where once he sat.

Que. Thou hast already
 Attain'd the lofty summit of his glory;
 His throne expects thee but to sit and fill it. [subjects

Art. No, madam, when the Gods choose worthy
 On whom to place such greatness, they surround
 The glorious prize with toil and thorny danger,
 And bid the man who would be great, dare greatly.
 Be it for dull elder brothers to possess
 Without deserving; mine's a nobler claim,
 Nor will I taste the Godlike joys of power,
 'Till men and Gods with justice shall confess
 'Tis barely the reward of what I merit.

Que. What means my son?

Art. To wrestle for a crown.

Que. With what fantastic shadow wouldst thou strive?
 The haughty rival of thy hopes is fall'n;
 He lives indeed, but 'tis to grace thy triumph,
 And bow before thee; then be swept away
 Like the remembrance of an idle dream,
 Which tho' of yesternight, is now forgotten.

Art. It grieves me much to say, my royal mother,
 I cannot take a crown upon these terms,
 Tho' even from your hands: The conscious virtue
 That witnesses within my breast for glory,
 Points me to greatness by the paths of honour,
 And urges me to do as a King ought,
 That would not wear his purple as the gift
 Of impious treachery and base deceit.

Que. Amazement turns my senses! Or I dream!
 For sure thou canst not mean so poor a folly.

Hast

Hast thou been bred in the wise arts of empire?
 Been early taught to know the worth of power?
 And wouldst thou lose the golden opportunity
 With which thy fortune courts thee, for a notion?
 An empty sound of virtue? A dry maxim,
 Which pedants have devis'd for boys to canvas?
 Can my son think so meanly? Go, set free
 (Since honour bids) this lordly elder brother,
 Bow like a slave before him, wait his pleasures,
 And live dependant on his scanty pension;
 He may reward thy servile loyalty,
 And make thee ruler of some petty province,
 In recompence of royalty giv'n up.

Art. No; (tho' I must confess I would not hold him
 Caught in a villain's snare, nor do a murder
 Unworthy of a hangman) yet to death
 I still defy him as my mortal foe.

And since my father's fate dissolves that truce,
 To which I stood engag'd, 'tis war again.
 Amidst the steely squadrons will I seek
 This haughty brother, by his friends surrounded,
 And back'd with all th' advantage of his birth;
 Then bravely prove upon him with my sword,
 He falsly brands me for a bookish coward,
 That nature's error only gave him preference,
 Since fate meant me the King.

Que. A mother's care is watchful for thy safety,
 Else wert thou lost, thou honourable fool;
 Long might'st thou vainly hunt in bloody fields
 For that advantage which thy willing fortune
 Now reaches to thy hands: In battles with
 Uncertain wings the wavering goddess flies,
 And oft with partial hand bestows her favour
 On fools and thick-skull'd heroes; seize her now,
 While she is thine, or she is lost for ever.

Art. No matter, let her fly; the eagle virtue
 Shall soar beyond her, and command her flight:
 Fortune is not my mistress, but my slave.
 Posterity, that reads the name of *Artaban*
 In the records of empire, shall not blush
 To think I plotted with a knavish priest,
 The scandal of his venerable function,
 And mark of the Gods vengeance, to betray

A Prince my enemy; as if being conscious
 Of lesser worth, and of unequal courage,
 I durst not fairly strive with him for greatness.
 Let the abhorr'd and impious treachery
 Obscurely die unknown to future ages;
 Or if our shame must be deliver'd down,
 By all the Kingly hopes that fire my soul,
 It shall not pass without a brand of punishment.

Que. 'Tis wondrous well! Young man, you King it
 You mean to be renown'd for early justice, [rarely!
 And mark your ostentatious love of virtue,
 Ev'n in their bloods who lift you up to power:
 Perhaps we too ourself must be arraign'd
 Before your puny bar, and feel your ax;
 'Twill be a noble subject for your praise,
 And yield much matter to declaiming flatterers.

Art. You, madam, are my mother, nature blinds me,
 And bids me see no faults in her that bore me;
 Those other slaves that dare——

Que. May be immortal,
 For ought that thou canst do to cause their fate.
 Is not thy power the creature of my favour,
 Which in precarious wise on me depending,
 Exists by my concurrence to its being?
 Mistaken youth! whose giddy brain ambition
 Has, like the fume of drunken vapors, turn'd;
 Think'st thou that I, whose soul was form'd for sway,
 Would lay the golden reins of empire down?
 Or trust 'em to the guidance of a boy,
 Who shall dispose of me, or those that serve me,
 According to the dictates of old morals,
 His bearded tutor gleans from musty authors?

Art. Nay then, 'tis time I should exert myself;
 And tho' you gave me birth, yet from the Gods
 (Who made my father be as he was, royal,
 And stamp'd the mark of greatness on my soul)
 I claim my right to empire: may I fall
 Vile and forgotten, if I ever own
 Any superior being but those Gods.

Que. Thou rav'st, and hast forgot me.

Art. No, you are
 My mother, and a woman, form'd to obey;
 On that condition all the sex's privileges

Are

Are founded: the creating hand has mix'd
Softness and beauty in your composition,
To charm and bend the mind of man, impatient
Of the ignoble pleasure; you were made for
The weakness and necessities of nature:
Ill are your feeble souls for greatness suited;
Desire of government is monstrous in you.

Que. Thou mighty goddess, nature! dost thou hear
This rebel son? this insolent upbraider,
Still fondly nurs'd in my indulgent bosom?
To build whose future greatness to the skies,
My anxious soul has labour'd more than when
I felt a mother's sorrow for his birth:
Ungrateful boy! ———

Know, fool! that vaunt'st thyself upon thy manhood,
The greatest he that rougher kind e'er had,
Must have confess'd woman's superior wit,
And own'd our sex's just prerogative.
Did not a mother's fondness plead hard for thee,
Thy head should pay the forfeit of thy insolence;
For know, young King, that I am fate in *Persia*,
And life and death depend upon my pleasure.

Art. The world would be well govern'd, should the
Depute their providence to women's care, [Gods
And trust them with the fate of Kings and empires.

Que. Yet thou art safe. Away, nor tempt me further.
The patience ev'n of Gods themselves has limits,
Tho' they with long forbearance view man's folly,
Yet if thou still persists to dare my power,
Like them I may be urg'd to loose my vengeance,
And tho' thou wert my creature, strike thee dead.

Mir. 'Beseech you, sir, retire; the Queen, your mo-
Labours with wisest foresight for your good, [ther,
And is incens'd to see you thwart that purpose.

Art. What is the good of greatness, but the power?
Madam, I leave you; my own innate virtue
Arms me against your rage, unjust and impotent:
Wait but the great success my soul divines,
And you will own your little juggling arts
Have only serv'd to obstruct a while my glory,
And skreen this elder brother from my conquest.

[*Exeunt Artaban and Cleanthes.*

Que. Some envious pow'r above, some hostile *Demon*,

54 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Works underhand against my stronger genius,
 And countermines me with domestic jars.
 Malicious chance! When all abroad was safe,
 To start an unseen danger from myself!
Mirza, didst not thou mark the haughty boy?
 With what assuming pride he own'd his daring,
 And claim'd superiority of power?
 Oh can I live and bear to be controll'd?
 To share the pleasure of supreme command
 With him or any one? Oh *Artemisa*!
 Didst thou disdain subjection to a husband,
 The proudest title of that tyrant man,
 And canst thou yield t'a boy, a son, by nature
 And grateful duty to obedience bound?

Mir. Madam, let me intreat you, by the Gods,
 To calm your just resentments: meddling fortune,
 (Whose malice labours to perplex the wise)
 If not prevented, will unravel all
 Those finer arts, which we with care have wove.
 The Prince led on by this pernicious honour,
 May set the pris'ners free; think, if that happen,
 To what a shock of fate we stand expos'd.

Que. 'Tis true; this foolish honour ruins all.
 Ridiculous notion! as if self-interest
 Were not the first and noblest law of nature.
 Say then, wise Lord, and let thy ready wit,
 Still present to itself, avert this blow.

Mir. One method, tho' ungentle, yet remains
 To remedy the fears this ill produces;
 This instant let a guard confine the Prince,
 Ere he can gain the means t'effect that mischief
 He meditates against himself and us:
 To-morrow, early as the morning dawns,
 The prisoners all shall die; that once dispatch'd,
 This raging fit of honour will relax,
 And give him leisure to consider coolly
 Th' advantage of his fortune.

Que. You have reason;
 And tho' I fear his haughty temper will
 But badly brook confinement, he must learn
 To bear it as he can; perhaps 'twill bend him,
 And make his youth more pliant to my will.

Mir. Your orders cannot be dispatch'd too soon,
 Each minute of the flying hours is precious.

Que.

Que. The eunuch *Bagoas*, let him attend us,
He shall receive instructions on the instant.

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E, Mirza's Palace.

*Enter Cleone in a man's habit, with a dark-lantern,
Beliza following.*

Cle. **Y**E gentle powers, who view our cares with
Lend your compassion to the poor *Amestris*.
Oh my *Beliza*! was not thy soul wounded,
To hear (when now we pass by her apartment)
The piercing accents of her loud complainings?
By Heav'n, my aking heart bleeds for her sufferings.

Bel. 'Tis sure she feels the bitterest pangs of woe;
And were not all my thoughts to you devoted,
Her grief would deeply sink into my soul.
Why will you tempt alone ten thousand dangers?
Your father's and the furious Queen's resentment?
The cruel guards, and all those fatal accidents,
Which in the horror of this dreadful night
Might shake the resolution of a man?

Cle. Prithee no more; thou know'st I am resolv'd,
And all thy kind advice is urg'd in vain;
Thy fond mistaking fears present the danger
More dreadful than it is: This master-key
Admits me thro' that passage to the temple,
By which the guards, who seiz'd th' unhappy Prince
This morning enter'd; that of all the rest
Is only left unguarded, and from thence,
Assisted by the friendly veil of night,
We may conduct him thro' my father's palace
In safety to the street; there undistinguish'd
Amongst the busy discontented crowd,
That swarm in murmuring heaps, he may retire;
Nor shall my father or the Queen e'er know
The pious fraud my love was guilty of.

Bel. Yet still I fear —

Cle. No more, retire and leave me;
My drooping heart sits lighter than it's wont,
And cheerfully presages good success.

56 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Bel. Where shall I wait you?

Cle. At my own apartment.

Bel. The mighty Gods protect you.

Cle. Softly: Retire.

[*Exit Beliza.*]

What noise was that? The creature of my fears.
In vain, fond maid, wouldst thou belye thy sex,
Thy coward soul confesses thee a woman,
A foolish, rash, fond woman. Where am I going?
To save my godlike hero. Oh my heart!
It pants and trembles; sure 'tis joy, not fear:
The thought has giv'n me courage; I shall save him,
The darling of my eyes. What if I fail?
Then death is in my reach, and ends my sorrows.

[*Shewing a dagger.*]

Why dost thou shake, my hand; and fear to grasp
This instrument of fate? If I succeed,
Yet *Artaxerxes* will not live for me;
And my despair will want thy friendly aid.
Death ev'ry way shuts up my gloomy prospect.
If then there be that *Lethe* and *Elysium*,
Which priests and poets tell, to that dark stream
My soul, of life impatient, shall make haste.
One healing draught my quiet shall restore,
And love forgotten ne'er disturb me more. [*Exit.*]

SCENE, *A Night Scene of the Temple of the Sun.*

Enter Artaxerxes and Memnon.

Arta. **S**TILL, 'tis in vain! this idle rage is vain:
And yet, my swelling passion will have
And rend my labouring breast till they find vent. [way;
Was it for this, ye cruel Gods, you made me
Great like yourselves, and as a King to be
Your sacred image? Was it but for this?
To be cut down, and mangled by vile hands,
Like the false object of mistaken worship?
Why rather was I not a peasant slave,
Bred from my birth a drudge to your creation,
And to my destin'd load inur'd betimes?

Mem. The malice of our fate were not compleat,

Had

Had we not been by just degrees to happiness
 Rais'd, only to be plung'd the deeper down
 In an abyss of woes. Early success
 Met and attended all my youthful wars ;
 And when I rush'd amidst the dreadful battle,
 The weaker *genii* of our ancient *Monarchs*
 Shrunk from the force of a superior fate ;
 O'er-match'd they fell, and by my sword were swept
 Like common beings from the glorious field.
 Then was the day of joyous triumph, then,
 My soul was lifted high, ev'n to the stars.
 But now — what am I now ? O damn'd reverse of
 fortune !

Now, when my age would be indulged in ease,
 And joy in pleasure of my former fame,
 Now I am curs'd ; held at a villains mercy,
 My foes derision, and the scorn of cowards.
Arta. Oh torture of my soul ! damn'd racking
 Am not I too reserv'd for servile vassalage ? [thought
 To be the subject of a boy's command ?
 A boy by nature set beneath my sway,
 And born to be my slave ! shall he triumph,
 And bid me live or die ? shall he dispose
 His beardless visage to a scornful smile,
 And tell me that his pleasure is my fate ?
 No : my disdainful soul shall struggle out,
 And start at once from its dishonour'd mansion.

Mem. Oh royal thought ! Nor shall they keep back
 Altho' its common means be not in reach. [death,
 Shall my old soldier's outside rough and hardy,
 Scarr'd o'er with many an honourable mark,
 Be cag'd for public scorn ? Shall a dog tell me,
 Thus didst thou once, and now thou art my slave ;
 My foot shall spurn thee, tread upon thy neck,
 And trample in the dust thy silver hairs ?
 Shall I not rather choak, hold in my breath,
 Or smear some wall or pillar with my brains ?

Arta. Rage, or some God shall save us from dishonour,
 But, Oh my father ! Can we take our flight,
 Tho' to the stars, and leave my love behind ?
 Where is she now ? Where is my Queen, my bride,
 My charmer, my *Amestris* ?

Mem. Speak not of her.

58 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Arta. Not speak?

Mem. Nor think of her, if possible.

Arta. Was she not snatch'd, torn from my helpless arms,

Whilst every God look'd on, and saw the wrong,
 Heard her loud cries, which vainly strove to rouse
 Their slow and ready vengeance? Was she not
 Forc'd from my panting bosom (yet I live)
 Ev'n on our bridal day? Then, when our flames
 Were kindly join'd, and made but one desire?
 Then, when she sigh'd and gaz'd, and blush'd and
 sigh'd?

When every touch, when every joy grew fiercer,
 And those that were behind were more than mortal?
 To lose her then! Oh! —

And yet you bid me think of her no more.

Mem. I do; for the bare mention turns my brain,
 And even now I border upon madness;
 So dreadful is the very apprehension
 Of what may be.

Arta. Can we make thought go back?
 Will it not turn again, cleave to our breasts,
 And urge remembrance till it sting us home?
 Ha! Now the ghastly scene is set before me;
 And as thou saidst it runs me to distraction:
 Behold her beauties, form'd for Kings to serve,
 Held vile, treated like an abject slave!
 Helpless amidst her cruel foes she stands,
 Insulting *Artemisa* mocks her tears,
 And bids her call the Gods and me in vain.

Mem. Would that were all.

Arta. Ha! whither wouldst thou drive me?

Mem. Did you like me consider that dog *Mirza*,
 Early to hell devoted, and the furies,
 Born, nurs'd, and bred a villain, you would fear
 The worst effects his malice could express
 On virtue which he hates, when in his power.

Arta. What is the worst?

Mem. What my old salt'ring tongue
 Trembles to utter; goatish lust and rape.

Arta. Ha! Rape! if there are Gods, it is im-
 possible.

Mem.

Mem. Oh! dreadful image for a father's thought!
To have his only child; her sex's boast,
'The joy of fight, and comfort of his age,
Dragg'd by a villain slave, his ruthless hand
Wound in her hair, to some remote dark cell,
A scene for horror fit, there to be blotted
By his foul lust, till appetite be gorg'd.
Let me grow savage first, let this old hand
That oft has blest'd her, in her blood be drench'd;
Let me behold her dead, dead at my foot,
To spare a father's greater shame and sorrow.

Arta. A father! What's a father's plague to mine;
A husband and a lover; if it can be,
If there is such a hoarded curse in store,
Transfix me now, ye Gods, now let your thunder
Fall on my head, and strike me to the centre,
Lest if I should survive my ruin'd honour
And injur'd love, I should ev'n curse your Godheads,
Run banning and blaspheming thro' the world,
And with my execrations fright your worshippers
From kneeling at your altars.

Enter Cleone, with a dark lanthorn and key.

Cle. This way the echoing accents seem to come:
Sure 'tis the wretched Prince! Oh can you hear him,
And yet refuse to lend your aid, ye Gods?

Arta. This gloom of horrid night suits well my soul,
Love, sorrow, conscious worth, and indignation,
Stir mad confusion in my lab'ring breast
And I am all o'er chaos,

Cle. Is this, alas!
The state of *Artaxerxes*, *Persia's* heir;
Not one poor lamp to cheer the dismal shade
Of this huge, holy dungeon! Slaves, murderers,
Villains that crosses wait for, are not us'd thus:
I'll shew myself.

[She turns the light and comes forward.]

Mem. Ha! whence this gleam of light?

Arta. Fate is at hand, lets haste to bid it welcome,
It brings an end of wretchedness.

Cle. Speak lower;
I am a friend: long live Prince *Artaxerxes*.

Arta. What wretch art thou, that hail'st me with a curse?
Come from that cloud that muffles up thy face,

60 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

And if thou hast a dagger, shew it boldly :
We wish to die.

Cle. Think better of my errand ;
I bring you blessings, liberty, and life,
And come the minister of happier fate.

[*Turns the light on herself.*

Now down, my blood, down to my trembling heart,
Nor sparkle in my visage to betray me. [*Aside.*

Arta. Ha ! as I live, a boy ! a blushing boy !
Thou wert not form'd sure for a murderer's office ;
Speak then, and tell me what and whence thou art.

Cle. Oh seek not to unveil a trivial secret,
Which known, imports you not. I am a youth
Abandon'd to misfortune from my birth,
And never knew one cause to joy in life,
But this that puts it in my power to save
A Prince like *Artaxerxes*. Ask no more,
But follow thro' the mazes that I tread,
Until you find your safety.

Arta. Thus forbidding,
Thou giv'st me cause t'enquire : Are then the guards,
That when the day went down, with strictest watch
Observ'd the temple gates, remov'd or fled ?

Cle. They are not, but with numbers reinforc'd
Keep every passage ; only one remains
Thro' *Mirza's* palace, open to your flight.

Mem. Ha ! *Mirza* ! there's damnation in his name,
Ruin, deceit, and treachery attend it ;
Can life, can liberty, or safety come
From him ? or ought that has an interest in him ?
Rather, suspect this feigning boy his instrument,
To plunge us deeper yet, if possible,
In misery ; perhaps some happy accident,
As yet to us unknown, preserves us from
The utmost malice of his hate while here,
This sets his wicked wit at work to draw us
Forth from this holy place ; much better be
The pris'ners of the Gods, than wear his fetters.

Cle. Unfortunate suspicion ! What shall I say
To urge 'em to be safe, and yet preserve
My wretched self unknown ?

[*Aside.*

Arta. Surely that face
Was not design'd to hide dissembled malice :

Say,

Say, youth, art thou of *Mirza's* house (as sure thou must,
If thou pretend'st to lead us that way forth)
And canst thou be a friend to *Artaxerxes*,
Whom that fell dog, that minister of devils,
With most opprobrious injuries has loaded?

Cle. Tho' I am his, yet sure I never shar'd
His hate.—Shall I confess and own my shame?
Oh Heavens! —

[*Aside.*

Mem. Mark, th' unready traitor stammers;
Half-bred and of the mungrel strain of mischief,
He has not art enough to hide the cheat,
His deep designing Lord had better plotted.
Away! thinks he so poorly of our wit,
To gull us with a novice? If our fate
Ha's giv'n us up, and mark'd us for destruction,
Tell him, we are resolv'd to meet it here.

Cle. Yet hear me, Prince, since you suspect me sent
By *Mirza* to ensnare you, know I serve
(Oh Gods! to what am I reduc'd!) [*Aside.*] — his
daughter:

Some God compassionate of your woes has stirr'd
A woman's pity in her softer breast;
And 'tis from her I come to give you liberty.
I beg you to believe me. [*She weeps.*

Arta. See, he weeps!

Mem. The waiting tears stood ready for command,
And now they flow to varnish the false tale.

Arta. His daughter, say'st thou? I have seen the maid,
Dost thou serve her? And could she send thee to me?
'Tis an unlikely riddle.

Mem. Perhaps 'tis meant,
That she who shares his poisonous blood, shall share
The pleasure of his vengeance, and inure
The woman's hands and eyes to death and mischief.
But thou, her instrument, be gone, and say,
'The fate of Princes is not sport for girls.

Cle. Some envious power blasts my pious purpose,
And nought but death remains: O that by that
I might persuade him to believe and trust me;
And fly that fate which with the morning waits him!

[*Aside.*

I grieve, my Lord, to find your hard suspicion
Debars me from preserving your dear life,
(Which not your own *Amestris* wishes more).

To-morrow's

To-morrow's dawn (Oh let me yet prevail)
 The cruel Queen resolves shall be your last.
 Oh fly ! let me conjure you, save yourself.
 May that most awful God that here is worshipp'd
 Deprive me of his chearful beams for ever,
 Make me the wretched'st thing he sees while living,
 And after death the lowest of the damn'd,
 If I have any thought but for your safety.

Arta. No, I have found the malice of thy mistress ;
 Since I refus'd her love when she was proffer'd
 By her ambitious father for my bride,
 And on a worthier choice bestow'd my heart,
 She vows revenge on me for slighted beauty.

Cle. My Lord, you do her most unmanly wrong,
 She owns the merit of the fair *Amestris*,
 Nor ever durst imagine she deserv'd you.
 Oh ! spare that thought, nor blot her virgin fame.
 In silence still she wonder'd at your virtues,
 Bless'd you, nor at her own ill fate repin'd ;
 This wounds her most, that you suspect unkindly
 Th' officious piety that would have sav'd you.
 Careless of an offended father's rage,
 For you alone concern'd, she charg'd me guide you
 When midnight sleep had clos'd observing eyes,
 Safe thro' her father's palace with this key—
 And if I met with any that durst bar
 Your passage forth, she bid me greet him thus——

[*Stabs herself.*
Arta. [*catching her as she falls.*] What hast thou
 done, rash boy ?

Cle. Giv'n you the last,
 And only proof remain'd, that could convince you
 I held your life much dearer than my own.

Mem. Horrid amazement chills my freezing veins !

Cle. Let me conjure you with my latest breath,
 Make haste to seize the means that may preserve you ;
 This key, amidst the tumult of this night,

[*Giving the key.*
 Will open you a way thro' *Mirza's* palace.
 May every God assist and guard your flight :
 And oh ! when all your hopes of love and glory
 Are crown'd with just success, will you be good,
 And think with pity on the lost *Cleone* ?

Arta.

Art. Ten thousand dismal fancies crowd my thoughts.
Oh! is it possible thou canst be she,
Thou most unhappy fair-one?

Cle. Spare my shame,
Nor call the blood that flows to give me peace,
Back to my dying cheeks. Can you forget
Who was my father? And remember only
How much I wish'd I had deserv'd your friendship?
Nay, let my tongue grow bold, and say, your love?
But 'twas not in my fate.

Arta. What shall I say,
To witness how my grateful heart is touch'd?
But, oh! why wouldst thou give this fatal instance?
Why hast thou stain'd me with thy virgin blood?
I swear, sweet saint, for thee I could forgive
The malice of thy father, tho' he seeks
My life and crown; thy goodness might atone
Ev'n for a nation's sins; look up, and live,
And thou shalt still be near me as my heart.

Cle. Oh charming sounds! that gently lull my soul
To everlasting rest; I swear 'tis more,
More joy to die thus blest'd, than to have liv'd
A Monarch's bride; may every blessing wait you
In war and peace, still may you be the greatest,
The favourite of the Gods, and joy of men —
I faint — Oh! let me lean upon your arm —

Arta. Hold up the light, my father: Ha! she swoons!
The iron-hand of death is on her beauties,
And see, like lilies nipp'd with frost, they languish.

Mem. My tough old soldier's heart melts at the sight,
And an unwonted pity moves my breast;
Ill-fated maid! too good for that damn'd race,
From which thou drew'st thy being! Sure the Gods,
Angry ere while, will be at length pleas'd
With this egregious victim: let us tempt 'em
Now while they seem to smile.

Arta. A beam of hope
Strikes thro' my soul, like the first infant light
That glanc'd upon the chaos; if we reach
The open city, fate may be ours again:
But oh! whate'er success or happiness
Attend my life, still fair unhappy maid,
Still shall thy memory be my grief and honour.

64 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

On one fix'd day in each returning year,
Cypress and myrtle for thy sake I'll wear,
Ev'n my *Amesfris* thy hard fate shall mourn,
And with fresh roses crown thy virgin urn,
Till in *Elysium* blest'd, thy gentle shade
Shall own my vows of sorrow justly paid. [Exeunt.]

A C T V.

SCENE, Mirza's Palace.

Enter Mirza, Magas, and attendants with lights.

Mir. PHO! you o'er-rate the danger.

Mag. If I do,

We err in the extremes, since you esteem it
As much too lightly; think you then 'tis nothing,
This horrid jar of tumult and confusion?
Heads white with years, and vers'd in long experience,
Who yet remember all the different changes
A rolling age produces, cannot call
To mind one instance dreadful as this night.
Infernal discord hideous to behold,
Hangs like its evil genius o'er the city,
And sends a snake to every vulgar breast.
From several quarters the mad rabble swarm,
Arm'd with the instruments of hasty rage,
And in confus'd disorderly array
Most formidable march: their differing clamors,
Together join'd, compose one deaf'ning sound;
Arm! Arm! they cry, religion is no more,
Our Gods are slighted, whom if we revenge not,
War, pestilence, and famine will ensue,
And universal ruin swallow all.

Mir. A crew of mean unthinking heartless slaves,
With ease stirr'd up to mutiny, and quell'd
With the same ease, with like expressions shew
Their joy or anger, both are noise and tumult.
And still, when holidays make labour cease,
They meet and shout: do these deserve our fears?

Mag. Most certainly they may; if we consider
Each circumstance of peril that concurs;

Tigranes,

Tigraanes, with the rest that 'scap'd the temple,
Are mix'd amongst this herd, and urge the wrongs
Which with the Gods their Prince and *Memnon* suffer.

Mir. Nor need we fear ev'n that, safe in the aid
And number of our friends, who treble theirs :
For this mad rout that hum and swarm together,
For want of somewhat to employ their folly,
Indulge 'em in their fancy for religion.
Thou and thy holy brotherhood of priests,
Shall in procession bear the sacred fire,
And all our golden Gods ; let their friends judge
If still they look not kindly as of old :
'Tis a most apt amusement for a crowd,
They'll gaze and gather round the gaudy shew,
And quite forget the thoughts of mutiny.
A guard shall wait you.

Mag. Why go not you too with us ?
They hold your wisdom in most high regard,
And will be greatly sway'd by your persuasion ;
Th' occasion is well worth your care and presence.

Mir. Oh ! you'll not need my aid : besides, my friend,
My hours this night are destin'd to a task
Of more import, than are the fates of millions
Such groveling souls as theirs. As yet the secret
Is immature, nor worth your present knowledge :
To-morrow that and all my breast is yours.

I must not, dare not trust him with my weakness, }
'Twill mark me for his scorn ; 'tis yet some wisdom, }
If we must needs be fools, to hide our folly. [*Aside.*] }

Mag. He means the pris'ners death ; let him engross }
The people's hate, monopolize damnation, }
I will be safely ignorant of mischief. [*Aside.*] }

Hereafter when your wisdom shall think fit
To share those thoughts, and trust 'em with your friend,
I shall be pleas'd to know ; this instant hour,
My cares are all employ'd on my own province,
Which hastes me hence.

Mir. May all your Gods assist you.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE.

66 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

SCENE, *An Apartment in Mirza's Palace.*

Enter Amestris.

[*Gods?*]

Ame. WILL ye not hear, ye ever-gracious
(Since sure you do not joy in our
misfortunes,

But only try the strength of our frail virtue.)
Are not my sorrows full? can ought be added?
My royal Lord, and father! yet dear names
In which my all of happiness was summ'd,
What have the ministers of fate done with you?
Are you not dead? Too sure! That's past a doubt;
O *Memnon*! Oh my Prince! My father! Oh my
husband!

Enter Mirza.

Mir. Such *Juno* was (except alone those tears)
When, upon *Ida*'s tops she charm'd the God,
That long had been a stranger to her bed;
Made him forget the business of the world,
And lay aside his providence, t' employ
The whole divinity upon her beauty.
And sure 'twas worth the while; had I been *Jove*,
So had I too been pleas'd to be deceiv'd
Into immortal joys. O cease thy tears! —

Ame. Give 'em me back, or if the grave and thou
Restore to none, Oh join my fate to theirs!
Shut us together in some silent vault,
Where I may sit and weep till death's kind hand
Shall lay me gently by my Lord's dear side,
And hush my sorrows in eternal slumber.

Mir. In pity to your form assuage those tears.
Sorrow is beauty's bane; nor let your breast
Harbour a fear: I wage not war with fair-ones;
But wish you would efface those ugly thoughts,
That live in your remembrance to perplex you;
Let joy, the native of your soul, return,
And love's gay God sit smiling in your eyes,
As erst he did; I wish you wondrous well,
And would so fully recompence the loss
You fondly mourn, that when you count the gains,
Yourself should own your fortunes are well chang'd.

Ame. Oh impious comforter! talk'st thou of joy,
Where

When nature dictates only death and horror?
 Is there a God can break the laws of fate,
 And give me back the precious lives I've lost?
 What nam'st thou recompence? Can ought atone
 For blood? A father's and a husband's blood?
 Such comfort brings the hungry midnight wolf,
 When having slain the shepherd, smear'd with gore,
 He leaps amidst the helpless bleating flock.

Mir. Away with this perverseness of thy sex,
 These foolish tears, these peevish sighs and sobbings;
 Look up, be gay, and cheer me with thy beauties,
 And to thy wish I will indulge thy fancy.
 Not all th' imagin'd splendor of the Gods
 Shall match thy pomp, sublimely shalt thou shine,
 The boast and glory of our *Asian* world;
 Nor shall one she of all thy tow'ring sex
 Out-rival thee (thou lovely fair) in power.
 Oh think on power, on power and place supreme.

Ame. There is but one, one only thing, to think on,
 My murder'd Lord, and his dark gaping grave,
 That waits unclos'd impatient of my coming.

Mir. Oh listen, gentle maid, while I impart
 A story of such softness to thy ear,
 As (like the *Halcyon* brooding o'er the waves)
 May with its influence hush thy stormy griefs.

Ame. Be gone; and if thou bear'st one thought of pity
 In that hard breast, Oh leave me to myself,
 Nor by thy presence, hideous to my soul,
 And horrid consolation, strive to add
 To my full woes, that swell'd without thy help,
 Already rise and bubble o'er the margin.

Mir. What if I talk'd of love?

Ame. Of love? Oh monster!

Mir. If love be monstrous, so is this fair frame,
 This beautiful world, this canopy, the sky;
 That sparkling shines with gems of light innumerable
 And so art thou and I, since love made all;
 Who kindly reconcil'd the jarring atoms
 In friendly league, and bid 'em be a world.
 Frame not thy lovely mouth then to blaspheme
 Thy great creator; thou art his, and made for
 His most peculiar service; thy bright eyes,
 Thy moist red lip, thy rising snowy bosom,

Thy .

68 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Thy every part was made to furnish joy,
 Ev'n to a riotous excess of happiness :
 Oh give me but to taste thy blissful charms,
 And take my wealth, my honour, pow'r, take all,
 All, all for recompence.

Ame. Execrable wretch!

Thus, is it thus thou wouldst assuage my sorrows?
 When thy inhuman bloody cruelty,
 Now with redoubling pangs cleaves my poor heart,
 Com'st thou bespotted with the recent slaughter
 To proffer impious love? Accursed fiend!
 Horror and grief shall turn me to a fury;
 Still with my echoing cries I will pursue thee,
 And halloo vengeance in thy guilty ears;
 Vengeance for murder! for my Prince's murder!
 And for my poor old father! Think not, villain,
 Who art the plague and scourge of human kind,
 That there is peace for thee, whilst I run mad
 With raging sorrow; vengeance, vengeance waits thee,
 Great as my woes!—My dear, dear *Artaxerxes*!

Mir. I am not lucky at the glosing art
 Of catching girls with words, but 'tis no matter,
 Force is a sure resort; and when at last
 Fierce as a tow'ring falcon from her height,
 I stoop to strike the prey, it is my own. [*Aside.*
 Obstinate fool, how dar'st thou cross my wishes?
 Since the same hand that has aveng'd me well
 Upon my other foes, commands thy fate;
 Tho' mercy in compassion of thy beauty
 Reach out her hand to save thee, yet if urg'd,
 Revenge may still take place: think well on that.

Ame. That, that is all the mercy which I ask:
 Indulge thy thirsty malice in my blood,
 And hasten me to peace. My woman's heart
 Shall gather all its little stock of courage
 To arm me for the blow. Tho' death be terrible,
 Ghastly and pale, yet I will joy to meet him;
 My better life already is destroy'd,
 Imperfect now and wanting half myself,
 I wander here in vain, and want thy hand
 To guide and re-unite me to my Lord.

Mir. Alas! thou hast not read aright thy destiny,
 Matter of much import requires thy life.

And

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 69

And still detains thee here: Come, I'll instruct thee,
And put thee in the way of fate's design.

[*Laying hold on her.*]

Ame. Unhand me, villain!

Mir. Nay, you must not struggle,
Nor frown, and look askew; fantastic sex:
That put men on the drudgery to force you
To your own satisfaction.

Ame. Let me go,
Abhorr'd, detested monster! shall he brave you,
You awful Gods? Shall not your lightning blast him?

Mir. Oh no! Your Gods have pleasures of their own;
Some mortal beauty charms the wanton *Jove*,
Within whose arms he revels, nor has leisure
To mind thy foolish screaming.

Ame. Hear me now, sweet Heaven!
Save me, ye Gods! Oh save me! save me! save me!

Mir. Come, come along! you see you strive in vain.
[*Striving with her.*]

Ame. Is there no hope of aid from Gods or men?
Oh let me turn to thee then, kneel to thee,
And with my pray'rs and tears implore thy pity.

Mir. Speak, for enchantment dwells upon thy tongue,
And all the flutt'ring spirits in my blood
Dance nimbly on to the celestial sound.

Ame. What shall I say to move him to compassion?
Thus groveling, prostrate thus upon the earth,
Let me conjure you, spare my virgin honour,
Spare to commit a wrong to you unprofitable,
Yet worse to me than torments, racks, and death;
Kill me, the last of my unhappy race
And let old *Memnon*'s name with me be lost.
If death be not enough, let me live wretched;
Pull off these robes, and clothe me like a slave,
Then send me out to labour at some village,
Where I may groan beneath a cruel master,
Be hardly us'd, and want e'en food and raiment:
Till cold, and dirt, and poverty, shall change
And make me loathsome as my fellow-wretches.
Oh! let my rags claim this one privilege,
To wrap me in the grave a spotless maid. [vain,

Mir. That tongue which pleads makes all intreating
Thy every motion, each complaining accent

Warms

70 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Warms me afresh, and urges new desire;
Thou art, thou must be mine, nor heaven, nor earth,
Nor the conspiring power of hell shall save thee;
I long to lose my age in thy embraces,
To bask and wanton in thy warmer sun,
Till a new youth shoot thro' me.

Ame. Chaste Diana,
And thou the guardian of the marriage-bed,
[*Getting loose from him.*
Thou royal *Juno*, oh protect thy votary!

Mir. My jaded age and weak enervate limbs
Falter and shrink, unequal to their office.
I pr'ythee yield, come, yield and be a Queen;
[*Laying hold on her again.*

Yield, and be any thing. I cannot bear
These fierce conclusive starts, this raging flame
That drinks my blood.

Ame. Oh never, never, never.
A cause like this will turn me to a fighter,
To my last gasp, to death I will resist.

Mir. My coward strength, dost thou go back from
beauty?

Rouze, and deserve the pleasure thou wouldst taste.

Ame. Unmanly traitor!—seize him, all ye fiends.
[*In the struggle she draws his own Ponyard, and stabs him.*

Mir. [*falling*] Damnation! Oh my heart! the
Has struck me to the earth. [curled steel

Ame. 'There sink for ever;
Nor rise again to plague thy wretched world.

Mir. My heated blood ebbs out, and now too late
My cooler reason bids me curse my folly.
Oh idiot, idiot! to be caught so poorly!
Where are thy fine arts now? Unravel'd all,
Mangl'd and cut to pieces by a girl!
Oh shame of wisdom! When revenge was sure,
And fate was in my grasp, to lose it all,
Neglect the noble game, run out my years
On the pursuit of joys I could not taste! —
My memory must be the jest of boys.

Ame. My boasted courage sinks at sight of blood.
[*Letting fall the Ponyard,*
Tho' justly shed, and I grow stiff with horror.

Mirza attempting to rise, falls again.
Mir.

Mir. It wo' not be! Life gushes out amain,
And I shall die without revenge or aid:
What noise is that without there? Help!

[*Trampling without.*]

Ame. Oh Heavens!
What will become of me?

Enter Orchanes hastily.

Orc. My Lord! Where are you?
Bleeding! and on the ground! What wretched accident?
Then fate resolves to make this night compleat,
Such as succeeding horrors ne'er shall match.

Mir. Oh my *Orchanes*! I am fall'n vilely,
And this last part of life will fully all
The wisdom and renown of what is past.
Methought thou talk'dst of horrors, speak 'em boldly,
And try if ought can add to this confusion.

Orc. Prepare, my Lord, and summon all your wife—
Your utmost constancy of soul to hear—— [dom,

Mir. No more! I cannot wait thy preparation,
Let the ill fortune take me as it finds me.

Orc. Then hear it thus; your daughter's dead——

Mir. My daughter!

Thy words have met with an unguarded side,
And pierce ev'n thro' my soul. Say, how? Where?
Tell me!——

Orc. As with a guard I kept the temple gates,
I heard old *Memnon* and the pris'ner Prince
Loud as the roaring ocean in a storm,
Echoing their rage thro' the vast sounding dome;
When on a sudden ere the night had gain'd
Four hours at most, the noise was hush'd in silence.
Wond'ring, and curious of the cause, I enter'd,
And found (oh grief to fight!) your lovely daughter
Dress'd like a boy, then warm, and newly dead.
One wound was on her breast. Why she was there,
Or how, we know not; to compleat the ill,
The pris'ners both are fled.

Mir. Fled! 'tis impossible.

Ha! which way? whither? how? they could not fly.

Ame. O wondrous turn of joy! Are they not dead
then? [Aside.

Orc. They could not 'scape the guards; no other
passage

Remain'd

Remain'd but yours, and even that was fast.
 Upon the instant I beset each avenue
 Which to your palace leads; happily as yet
 They are not pass'd from thence.

Ame. Guard 'em, ye Gods!

[*Aside.*

Mir. Find 'em again, *Orchanes*, ere I die,
 Or I am more than doubly damn'd; this loss
 Is worse than mine, worse than my daughter's death.
 'Tis death of my revenge. Malicious fortune!
 She took the moment when my wisdom nodded,
 And ruin'd me at once. O doating fool!
 Thou fool of love, and of pernicious woman!
 I sicken; nature fails me: Oh revenge!
 Will not thy cordial keep back flying life?
 It shall; *Orchanes*, drag that traitress to me.

Ame. Oh if thou art a man, I charge thee loose me,
 And scorn his bidding, scorn to be his slave,
 A devil's drudge in mischief. Save me from death,
 Have pity on my youth, oh spare my youth!

[*Orchanes pulls Amestris down to Mirza.*

Mir. Harken not to her, drag her, pull her down:
 Shall *Memnon* boast of thee, while I die childless?
 No, to *Cleone's* ghost thou art a victim.
 O could I but have seen thee with those eyes
 I view thee now, I had been wise and safe;
 That face shall make no more fools in this world,
 Down; bear thy fatal beauties down to Hell,
 And try if thou canst charm among't the dead.
 Die, witch; enchantress, die. [*He stabs her.*

Ame. Ah! mercy, Heavens!

Mir. I thank thee, hand, at least for this last service.
 Now fly, *Orchanes*, haste and tell the Queen,
 My latest breath stays for her—Something I would

[*Exit Orchanes,*

Important to her service—I breathe short,
 Life stays in pain, and struggles to be gone,
 I strive in vain to hold it—Ha! what mean
 These fleeting shades that dance before my sight?
 'Tis death, I feel it plain; the dreadful change
 That nature starts at. Death!—Death!—What is
 death?

'Tis a vast disquisition, priests and scholars

Enquire

Enquire whole ages, and are yet in doubt.
My head turns round—I cannot form one thought
That pleases me about it—Dying—must resolve me.

[*dies.*]

Ame. Oh my hard fortune! must I die? die now,
When *Artaxerxes* calls and bids me live?
His dear lov'd image stays my parting soul,
And makes it linger in its ruin'd house.
Ha! sure he's dead—'tis so, and now he stands

[*Looking on Mirza.*]

Arraign'd before the dread impartial judges,
To answer to a long account of crimes;
Had I but strength, perhaps my fate may yet [*Rising.*
Find out a way to save me.

My love and father make life worth my care,
Alas! my blood flows fast; this way, I think.

[*Goes off faintly.*]

*Enter at the other side Artaxerxes and Memnon, with a
sword and dark-lantern.*

Mem. Ha! here are lights, hold up thy weapon, son.

Arta. And see, blood and a body on the floor!
What means this scene of death? What wretch art
thou?

Oh all ye juster powers! 'tis *Mirza*, see,
He seems now dead.

Mem. Damnation then is new to him.
And if there be one deeper pit of sulphur,
One plague above the rest in those dark regions,
He as the most abandon'd dog may claim it,
And vie for preference with devils themselves.

Re-enter Amestris.

Ame. The doors are guarded, fate has clos'd me
round.

Arta. Ha! art thou my *Amestris*?

Mem. Oh my daughter!

[*They run to her.*]

Ame. Are ye then come at last to bless my eyes,
Which could not close without one parting view?
O hold me, or I sink—

Mem. Alas! my child—

Arta. My cruel fears! why art thou pale and faint?
Ha, whence this blood? Oh killing spectacle!

Ame. Forth from my heart the crimson river flows,

74 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

My lavish heart, that hastily consumes
Its small remain of life: Oh lay me gently
On my last bed the earth, whose cold hard bosom
Must shortly be the place of my long rest. [sinn'd,

Mem. What have we done? or, Oh! if we have
What has thy innocence done to merit this?

Ame. That villain *Mirza*——

Mem. Ha! Say, what of him?

Ame. Offer'd most brutal outrage to my honour.

Arta. Oh ye eternal rulers of the world,
Could you look on unmov'd? But say, instruct me,
That I may bow before the God that fav'd thee.

Ame. Sure 'twas some chaster pow'r that made me
bold,

And taught my trembling hand to find the way
With his own poniard to the villain's heart.

Mem. Thou art my daughter still! Oh noble action!
That gives in death an interval of joy.

Ame. Just in that hour of fate a villain enter'd,
By whose assistance the revengeful *Mirza*
Forc'd me to share death with him.

Arta. 'Tis past, 'tis past; [*Lying down.*
And all those fires that lighted up my soul,
Glory and bright ambition languish now,
And leave me dark and gloomy as the grave.
Oh thou soft dying sweetness!——shall I rage
And curse myself? Curse ev'n the Gods?——Oh no;
I am the slave of fate, and bow beneath
The load that presses me; am sunk to earth,
And ne'er shall rise again: here will I sit
And gaze till I am nothing.

Ame. Alas! my Lord,
Fain would I strive to bid you not be sad,
Fain would I chear your grief, but 'tis in vain:
I know by my own heart it is impossible;
For we have lov'd too well. Oh mournful nuptials!
Are these the joys of brides? Indeed 'tis hard,
'Tis very hard to part; I cannot leave you;
The agonizing thought distracts me; hold me,
Oh hold me fast, death shall not tear me from you.

Arta. O could my arms fence thee from destiny,
The Gods might lanch their thunder on my head,
Plague me with woes treble to what I feel:

With

With joy I would endure it all to save thee.
 What shall I say? What shall I do to save thee?
 Grief shakes my frame, it melts my very temper;
 My manly constancy and royal courage
 Run gushing thro' my eyes: Oh my *Amestris*!

Ame. And see my father! his white beard is wet
 With the sad dew.

Mem. I try'd to man my heart,
 But could not stand the buffet of this tempest.
 It tears me up—My child! Ha! art thou dying?

Ame. Indeed I'm very sick, oh hold me up!
 My pain increases, and a cold damp dew
 Hangs on my face. Is there no help? no ease?
 Have I your arm, my love?

Arta. Thou hast; my heart,
 Dost thou yet hold?

Ame. Say, will you not forget me,
 When I am laid to moulder in my tomb?
 'Tis sure you will not, still there will be room
 For my remembrance in your noble heart;
 I know you lov'd me truly. Now I faint.
 Oh, shield me, shield me from that ugly phantom,
 The cave of death! how dark and deep it is!
 I tremble at the sight—'tis hideous horror!
 The gloom grows o'er me—Let me not lie there.

[*dies.*
Arta. There life gave way, and the last rosy breath
 Went in that sigh. Death, like a brutal victor,
 Already enter'd, with rude haste defaces
 The lovely frame he 'as master'd; see how soon
 These starry eyes have lost their light and lustre!
 Stay, let me close their lids. Now for the rest;
 Old *Memnon*! Ha! grief has transfix'd his brain,
 And he perceives me not!—Now what of thee?
 Think'st thou to live, thou wretch? Think not of any
 thing;

Thought is damnation, 'tis the plague of devils
 To think on what they are. And see, this weapon
 Shall shield me from it, plunge me in forgetfulness,
 Ere the dire scorpion, thought, can rouse to sting me.
 Lend me thy bosom, my cold bride: all fortune

[*Lying by her.*
 Has done its worst, and we shall part no more;

76 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Wait for me, gentle spirit, since the stars
Together must receive us. [*Stabs himself.*] Oh well aim'd!
How foolish is the coward's fear of death!
Of death, the greatest—surest way to peace.

[*dies.*

[*Memnon stands looking on the bodies some time, and then speaks.*

Mem. Yet will I gaze! yet, tho' my eyes grow stiff,
And turn to steel or marble. Here's a sight
To bless a father! These, these were your gifts,
Ye bounteous Gods! You'll spare my thanks for them.
You gave me being too, and spun me out
To hoary wretchedness; away, 'twas cruelty:
Oh cursed, cursed, cursed fourscore years,
Ye heap of hills, ye monstrous pile of plagues!
Sure they lov'd well, the very streams of blood,
That flow from their pale bosoms, meet and mingle.
Stay, let me view 'em better—Nay, 'tis thus—
If thou art like thy mother—She died too—
Where is she?—Ha! that dog, that villain *Mirza*,
He bears her from me: shall we not pursue?—
The whirl of battle comes across me, fly;
Be gone; they shall not, dare not brave me thus;
Hey, 'tis a glorious sound! rush on, my Prince,
We'll start and reach the goal of fate at once.

[*Runs off.*

Enter, on the other side, Queen, and attendants with lights.

Que. Why am I summon'd with this call of death?
This is no common ruin; *Artaxerxes*!
And *Memnon's* daughter! *Mirza*, thou art fallen
In pompous slaughter: Could not all thy arts,
That dol'd about destruction to our enemies,
Guard thy own life from fate? Vain boast of wisdom,
That with fantastic pride, like busy children,
Builds paper towns and houses, which at once
The hand of chance o'erturns, and loosely scatters!

1 Attend. Oh dismal sight! [*Looking.*

Que. What is it frights thy eyes?

1 Attend. Old *Memnon's* body.

Que. 'Tis a grateful horror.

1 Attend. Upon the floor the batter'd carcase lies
Weltring in gore, whilst on the marble wall

A dreadful

A dreadful mass of brains, grey hair, and blood
Is smear'd in hideous mixture.

Que. Fierce despair
Has forc'd a way for the impetuous soul.
'Tis well, he is in peace — what means this tumult ?

[Shout, clashing of swords.]

Enter an Officer his sword drawn.

Off. Fly, Madam, lest your person be not safe ;
The traitor *Bagoas*, to whose charge you trusted
The Prince your son, has drawn the guards to join him,
And now assisted by the furious rabble,
On every side they charge those few who keep
This palace and the temple, with loud outcries,
Proclaiming that they mean to free the pris'ners.
Orbanes, ere I fled to give you notice,
Fell by the Prince's hand ; the raging torrent
Bore down our weak resistance, and pursuing
With furious haste, ev'n trod upon my flight :
This instant brings 'em here.

Que. Let 'em come on,
I cannot fear : this storm is rais'd too late,
I stand secure of all I wish already.

[Shouts and clashing of swords again.]

*Enter Artaban, Cleanthes, and attendants, their
swords drawn.*

Art. Then virtue is in vain, since base deceit
And treachery have triumph'd o'er the mighty.
Oh nature ! let me turn my eyes away,
Lest I am blasted by a mother's sight.

Que. Ungrateful rebel ! Do thy impious arms
Pursue me for my too indulgent fondness,
And care for thee ?

Art. Well as that care been shewn ;
Have you not foully stain'd my sacred fame ?
Look on that scene of blood ; the dire effects
Of cruel female arts. — But oh what recompence ?
What can you give me for my murder'd love ?
Has not the labyrinth of your fatal counsels
Involv'd my fair, my lovely, lost *Cleone* ?
By our bright Gods I swear, I will assert
The majesty of manly government,
Nor wear again your chains : Still as our mother
Be honour'd ; rule among your maids and eunuchs,

78 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Nor mingle in our state, where mad confusion
Shakes a whole frame, to boast a woman's cunning.

Que. Thou talk'st as if thy infant hand could grasp,
Guide, and command the fortune of the world;
But thou art young in pow'r. Remember, boy,
Thy father, once the hero of his age,
Was proud to be the subject of my sway;
The warrior to the woman's wit gave way,
And found it was his interest to obey. }
And dost thou hope to shake off my command?
Dost thou, the creature of my forming hand?
When I assert the pow'r thou dar'st invade, }
Like Heaven I will resolve to be obey'd,
And rule or ruin that which once I made.

[*Exeunt Queen and Attendants.*]

Art. Let a guard wait the Queen: Tho' nature plead
For reverence to her person, jealous power
Must watch her subtle and ambitious wit.
Hast thou secur'd the impious priest, *Cleanthes*?
Magas, that wretch that prostitutes our Gods?

Clea. Already he as met the fate he merited;
This night the hypocrite in grand procession
March'd thro' the city to appease the people,
And bore the Gods along to aid his purpose:
When on a sudden, like a hurricane,
'That starts at once, and ruffles all the ocean,
Some fury more than mortal seiz'd the crowd;
At once they rush'd, at once they cry'd revenge;
Then snatch'd and tore the trembling priest to pieces.
What was most strange, no injury was offer'd
To any of the brotherhood beside,
But all their rage was ended in his death:
Like formal justice that severely strikes,
And in an instant is serene and calm.

Art. Oh my *Cleanthes*, do but cast thy thoughts
Back on the recent story of this night;
And thou with me wilt wonder, and confess
The Gods are great and just. Well have you mark'd,
Celestial powers, your righteous detestation
Of sacrilege, of base and bloody treachery.
May this example guide my future sway:
Let honour, truth and justice crown my reign,
Ne'er let my Kingly word be given in vain,
But ever sacred with my foes remain. }

On.

On these foundations shall my empire stand,
 The Gods shall vindicate my just command,
 And guard that power they trusted to my hand.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

End of the Fifth Act.

E P I L O G U E.

THE spleen and vapors, and this doleful play,
 Have mortify'd me to that height to day,
 That I am almost in the mortal mind
 To die indeed, and leave you all behind.
 Know then, since I resolve in peace to part,
 I mean to leave to one alone my heart:
 (Last favours will admit of no partage,
 I bar all sharing, but upon the stage)
 To one who can with one alone be blest,
 The peaceful Monarch of a single breast:
 To one——But oh! how hard'twill be to find
 That phoenix in your fickle changing kind!
 New loves, new interest, and religions new,
 Still your fantastic appetites pursue.
 Your sickly fancies loath what you possess,
 And every restless fool would change his place.
 Some weary of their peace and quiet grown,
 Want to be hoisted up aloft, and shewn;
 Whilst from the envy'd height, the wise get safely down.
 We find your wavering temper to our cost,
 Since all our pains and care to please is lost.
 Music in vain supports with friendly aid
 Her sister poetry's declining head:
 Show but a mimic ape, or French buffoon,
 You to the other house in shoals are gone,
 And leave us here to tune our crouds alone.
 Must Shakespear, Fletcher, and laborious Ben?
 Be left for Scaramouch and Harlequin?
 Allow you are unconstant, yet 'tis strange,
 For sense is still the same, and ne'er can change:

80 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

*Yet ev'n in that you vary as the rest,
And every day new notions are profess'd;
Nay there's a * wit has found, as I am told,
New ways to Heav'n, despairing of the old:
He swears he'll spoil the clerk and sexton's trade,
Bells shall no more be rung, nor graves be made;
The hearse and six no longer be in fashion,
Since all the faithful may expect translation.
What think you of the project? I'm for trying,
I'll lay aside these foolish thoughts of dying;
Preserve my youth and vigor for the stage,
And be translated in a good old age.*

* Asgill.

MA 55

TAMER-

7 MA 55

TAMERLANE.



Baratta ad viv. del.

Walker sculp.

MR. PALMER as BAJAZET and
MISS HOPKINS as SELIMA.

Baj. Now, now thou Traitor. *(Act 5.)*

Published Dec. 21. 1776. by J. Lowndes & Partners.

T A M E R L A N E :

A

T R A G E D Y.

— — — Magnus ad altum
Fulminat Euphraten bello, victorque volentes
Per Populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo.
VIRG. Georg. 4.



To the Right Honourable

William, Lord Marquiss of Hartington, (now
Duke of DEVONSHIRE.)

MY LORD,

EVERY body is now so full of business, that things of this kind, which are generally taken for the entertainment of leisure hours only, look like impertinence and interruption. I am sure it is a reason why I ought to beg your Lordship's pardon, for troubling you with this tragedy; not but that poetry has always been, and will still be the entertainment of all wise men, that have any delicacy in their knowledge; yet at so critical a juncture as this is, I must confess I think your Lordship ought to give entirely into those public affairs, which at this time seem to demand you. It is that happy turn which your Lordship has to business, that right understanding of your country's interest, and that constant zeal to pursue it, that just thinking, that strong and persuasive elocution, that firm and generous resolution, which upon all occasions you have shewn in Parliaments; and to add, that which is the crowning good quality, your Lordship's continual adherence and unshaken loyalty to his present Majesty, which make you at this time so necessary to the public. I must confess, (though there is no part in your Lordship's character, but what the world should be fond of) I cannot help distinguishing the last instance very particularly: It is doing (methinks) such a justice to goodness, to greatness, and to right reason, that posterity will believe there could be no man of good sense, but what must have agreed with your Lordship in it. When the next age shall read the history of this, what excuse can they make for those who did not admire a Prince whose life has been a series of good offices done to mankind? When they shall reckon up his labours from the battle of *Senef*, to some
E. 6. glorious

glorious action, which shall be his last (and which I therefore hope is very far remov'd from the present time) will they ever believe that he could have been too well beloved, or too faithfully served and defended? The great things which he did before we had that immediate interest in him, which we now happily have, are a noble and just subject for panegyric; but as benefits done to others, can never touch us so sensibly as those we receive ourselves, though the actions may be equally great; so, methinks, I can hardly have patience to run back to his having saved his own country, when I consider he has since done the same for us; let that be sufficient to us, for all we can say of him, or do for him. What dangers and difficulties has he not struggled thro' for the honour and safety of these kingdoms? It is a common praise, and what every one speaks, to say, he has continually exposed his life for his people; but there are some things more particular in his character, some things rarely found amongst the policies of Princes; a zeal for religion, moderated by reason, without the rage and fire of persecution; a charitable compassion for those who cannot be convinced, and an unalterable perseverance in those principles of whose truth he is satisfied; a desire of war for the sake of peace; and of peace for the good and honour of his subjects equally with his own; a pious care for composing factions, tho' to foment them might make him arbitrary; and a generous ambition that only aims at power, to enable him to do good to all the rest of the world. I might add here, that inviolable and religious observance of his royal word, which the best part of the powers of *Europe* have so frequently and so happily, for themselves, depended upon in the greatest emergencies. But as this virtue is generally reckoned as no more than that common honesty, which the meanest man would blush to be without, so it can hardly claim a place amongst the more particular excellencies of a great Prince. It were to be wished, indeed, that the world were honest to such a degree, and that there were not that scandalous defect of common morality. Certainly nothing can be more shocking to humanity, to the peace and order of the world; nothing can approach nearer to that savage state of nature, in which every man is to eat his fellow

if

if he can master him, than an avowed liberty of breaking through all the most solemn engagements of public faith. It is something that brands a man with an infamy, which nothing can extenuate or wipe out; he may protest and pretend to explain his meaning, but the world has generally too much indignation for the affront, to bear it at that easy rate. Ministers and secretaries of state may display their own parts in memorials, with as much pomp and flourish as they please: I fancy the common answer upon such occasions will always be, you have deceived us grossly, and we neither can nor will trust you any more. When this vice comes amongst men of the first rank, it is the more shocking, and I could wish there were none such, to whose charge it might be laid.

Some people (who do me a very great honour in it) have fancied that in the person of *Tamerlane* I have alluded to the greatest character of the present age. I do not know, whether I ought not to apprehend a great deal of danger from avowing a design like that. It may be a task indeed worthy the greatest genius, which this, or any other time has produced. But therefore I ought not to stand the shock of a parallel, lest it should be seen, to my disadvantage, how far the *hero* has *transcended the poet's thought*. There are many features, it is true, in that great man's life, not unlike his Majesty: His courage, his piety, his moderation, his justice, and his fatherly love of his people, but above all, his hate of tyranny and oppression, and his zealous care for the common good of mankind, carry a large resemblance of him: Several incidents are alike in their stories; and there wants nothing to his Majesty but such a deciding victory, as that by which *Tamerlane* gave peace to the world. That is yet to come; but I hope we may reasonable expect it from the unanimity of the present Parliament, and so formidable a force as that unanimity will give life and vigor to.

If your Lordship can find any thing in this poem like a Prince, who is so justly the object of your Lordship's, and, indeed, of the world's veneration, I persuade myself it will prevail with you to forgive every thing else that you find amiss. You will excuse the faults in writing, for the goodness of the intention. I hope too,
your

your Lordship will not be displeased, that I take this opportunity of renewing the honour which I formerly had, to be known to your Lordship, and which gives me at once the pleasure of expressing those just and dutiful sentiments I have for his Majesty, and that strong inclination which I have always had to be thought,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient

humble Servant,

N. ROWE.

P R O L O G U E.

*OF all the mases various labours none
 Have lasted longer, or have higher flown,
 Than those that tell the fame by ancient heroes won.
 With pleasure Rome, and great Augustus heard
 Arms and the man sung by the Mantuan bard;
 In spite of time, the sacred story lives,
 And Cæsar and his empire still survives.
 Like him, (tho' much unequal to his flame)
 Our author makes a pious Prince his theme.
 High with the foremost names in arms he stood,
 Had fought, and suffer'd for his country's good,
 Yet sought not fame, but peace, in fields of blood.
 Safe under him his happy people sate,
 And griev'd at distance for their neighbour's fate.
 Whilst with success a Turkeish Monarch crown'd,
 Like spreading flame deform'd the nations round;
 With sword and fire he forc'd his impious way
 To lawless pow'r, and universal sway:
 Some abject states for fear the tyrant join;
 Others for gold their liberties resign,
 And venal Princes sold their right divine.
 Till Heav'n, the growing evil to redress,
 Sent Tamerlane to give the world a peace.
 The hero rous'd asserts the glorious cause,
 And to the field the chearful soldier draws:
 Around in crowds his valiant leaders wait,
 Anxious for glory, and secure of fate;
 Well pleas'd, once more to venture on his side,
 And prove that faith again which had so oft been try'd.
 The peaceful fathers, who in Senates meet,
 Approve an enterprize so just, so great;
 While with their Prince's arms, their voice thus join'd,
 Gains half the praise of having sav'd mankind.
 Ev'n in a circle, where like this, the fair
 Were met, the bright assembly did declare
 Their house with one consent were for the war.
 Each urg'd her lover to unsheath his sword,
 And never spare a man who broke his word.
 Thus fir'd, the brave on to the danger press;
 Their arms were crown'd abroad with just success,
 And blest at home with beauty and with peace.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

At Drury Lane.

At Covent Garden.

Tamerlane,	—	—	Mr. SMITH.	Mr. HENDERSON,
Bajazet,	—	—	Mr. PALMER.	Mr. S. KEMBLE.
Axalla,	—	—	Mr. GRIST,	Mr. WHITFIELD.
Monefes,	—	—	Mr.	Mr. WROUGHTON,
Stratocles,	—	—	Mr. FARREN.	
Prince of Tanais,	—	—	Mr. WRIGHTEN,	Mr. BOOTH.
Omar,	—	—	Mr. HURST.	Mr. FEARON.
Mirvan,	—	—	Mr. NORRIS.	
Zama,	—	—	Mr. WRIGHT.	
Haly,	—	—	Mr. CHAPLIN,	Mr. J. BATES.
Dervise,	—	—	Mr. BRANSEY,	Mr. THOMPSON,
		W O M E N.		
Arpasia,	—	—	Miss YOUNGE.	Mrs. BATES,
Selma,	—	—	Mrs. SHARPE.	Mrs. KEMBLE.

Perthian and Tartar soldiers, mutes belonging to Bajazet, other attendants.

SCENE, Tamerlane's Camp, near Angoria in Galatia.

T A M E R L A N E.

A C T I.

SCENE, *Before Tamerlane's Tent.*

Enter the Prince of Tanais, Zama, and Mirvan.

Pr. **H**AIL to the sun! from whose returning light
The chearful foldier's arms new lustre take,
To deck the pomp of battle. O my friends!
Was ever such a glorious face of war?
See, from this height! how all *Galatia's* plains
With nations numberless are cover'd o'er;
Who, like a deluge, hide the face of earth,
And leave no object in the vast horizon,
But glitt'ring arms, and skies.

Za. Our *Asian* world
From this important day expects a Lord,
This day they hope an end of all their woes,
Of tyranny, of bondage, and oppression,
From our victorious emp'ror, *Tamerlane*.

Mir. Well has our holy *Alba* mark'd him out
The scourge of lawless pride, and dire ambition,
The great avenger of the groaning world.
Well has he worn the sacred cause of justice
Upon his prosp'rous sword: approving Heav'n
Still crown'd the right'ous warrior with success;
As if he said, go forth, and be my champion,
Thou most like me of all my works below.

Pr. No lust of rule, the common vice of Kings,
No furious zeal inspir'd by hot-brain'd priests,
Ill hid beneath religion's specious name,
E'er drew his temp'rate courage to the field:
But to redress an injur'd people's wrongs,
To save the weak one from the strong oppressor,
Is all his end of war; and when he draws
The sword to punish, like relenting Heav'n,
He seems unwilling to deface his kind.

Mir. So rich his soul in ev'ry virtuous grace,
That, had not nature made him great by birth,
Yet all the brave had sought him for their friend:

The

The Christian Prince *Axalla*, nicely bred
In polish'd arts of *European* courts,
For him forsakes his native *Italy*,
And lives a happy exile in his service.

Pr. Pleas'd with the gentle manners of that Prince;
Our mighty Lord is lavish to his friendship;
Tho' *Omar*, and the *Tartar* Lords repine,
And loudly tax their Monarch as too partial.

Za. Ere the mid hour of night, from tent to tent,
Unweary'd, thro' the num'rous host he past,
Viewing with careful eyes each sev'ral quarter;
Whilst from his looks, as from divinity,
The soldiers took presage, and cried, lead on,
Great *Alba*, and our emperor, lead on,
To victory, and everlasting fame.

Mir. Hear you of *Bajazet*?

Pr. Late in the evening

A slave of near attendance on his person,
'Scap'd to our camp: from him we learn'd the tyrant
With rage redoubled, for the fight prepares;
Some accidental passion fires his breast,
(Love, as 'tis thought, for a fair *Grecian* captive);
And adds new horror to his native fury:
For five returning suns, scarce was he seen
By any the most favour'd of his court,
But in lascivious ease among his women,
Liv'd from the war retir'd; or else alone
In sullen mood sat meditating plagues,
And ruin to the world, 'till yester morn,
Like fire that lab'ring upwards rends the earth,
He burst with fury from his tent, commanding
All should be ready for the fight this day.

Za. I know his temper well, since in his court
Companion of the brave *Axalla's* embassy,
I oft observ'd him, proud, impatient
Of ought superior, ev'n of Heav'n that made him,
Fond of false glory, of the savage pow'r
Of ruling without reason, of confounding
Just and unjust, by an unbounded will;
By whom religion, honour, all the bands
That ought to hold the jarring world in peace,
Were held the tricks of state, snares of wise Princes
To draw their easy neighbours to destruction.

Mir.

Mir. Thrice, by our Law and Prophet, has he sworn,
 By the world's Lord and Maker, lasting peace
 With our great master, and his royal friend
 The *Grecian* Emperor ; as oft regardless
 Of plighted faith, with most un-kingly baseness,
 H'has ta'en the advantage of their absent arms,
 Without a war proclaim'd, or cause pretended,
 To waste with sword and fire their fruitful fields :
 Like some accursed fiend who scap'd from hell,
 Poisons the balmy air thro' which he flies :
 He blasts the bearded corn, and laded branches,
 The lab'ring hind's best hopes, and marks his way
 with ruin.

Pr. But see ! his fate, the mighty *Tamerlane*
 Comes like the proxy of inquiring Heav'n,
 To judge and to redress. [*Flourish of Trumpets.*]

Enter Tamerlane, Guards, and other Attendants.

Tam. Yet, yet a little, and destructive slaughter
 Shall rage around, and mar this beauteous prospect ;
 Pass but an hour which stands betwixt the lives
 Of thousands and eternity : What change
 Shall hasty death make in yon glitt'ring plain ?
 Oh thou fell monster, war ! that in a moment
 Lay'st waste the noblest part of the creation,
 The boast and master-piece of the Great Maker,
 That wears in vain th' impression of his image,
 Unprivileg'd from thee.

Health to our friends, and to our arms success,

[*To the Prince, Zama, and Mirvan.*]

Such as the cause, for which we fight, deserves.

Pr. Nor can we ask beyond what Heav'n bestows,
 Preventing still our wishes. See, great Sir,
 The universal joy your soldiers wear,

Omen of prosp'rous battle.

Impatient of the tedious night, in arms
 Watchful they stood, expecting op'ning day ;
 And now are hardly by their leaders held
 From darting on the foe ; like a hot courser,
 That bounding paws the mould'ring soil, disdaining
 The rein that checks him, eager for the race.

Tam. Yes, Prince, I mean to give a loose to war :
 This morn, *Axalla*, with my *Parthian* horse,
 Arrive to join me : He, who like a storm

Swept

Swept with his flying squadrons all the plain
Between *Angoria's* walls and yon tall mountains,
That seem to reach the clouds; and now he comes
Loaden with spoils, and conquest, to my aid.

[*Flourish of Trumpets.*]

Za. These trumpets speak his presence—

*Enter Axalla with soldiers. Moncef, Stratocles and
Selima prisoners.* [*Axalla kneels to Tamerlane.*]

Tam. Welcome! thou worthy partner of my laurels,
Thou brother of my choice, a band more sacred
Than nature's brittle tie. By holy friendship!
Glory and fame stood still for thy arrival,
My soul seem'd wanting in its better half,
And languish'd for thy absence like a prophet,
That waits the inspiration of his God.

Ax. My emperor! my ever royal master!
To whom my secret soul more lowly bends,
Than forms of outward worship can express;
How poorly does your soldier pay this goodness,
Who wears his every hour of life out for you?
Yet 'tis his all, and what he has he offers;
Nor now disdain to accept the gift he brings,
This earnest of your fortune. See, my Lord,
The noblest prize, that ever grac'd my arms:
Approach my fair—

Tam. This is indeed to conquer,
And well to be rewarded for thy conquest;
The bloom of opening flowers, unsullied beauty,
Softness, and sweetest innocence she wears,
And looks like nature in the world's first spring;
But say, *Axalla* —

Sel. Most renown'd in war,

[*Kneeling to Tamerlane.*]

Look with compassion on a captive maid,
Tho' born of hostile blood; nor let my birth,
Deriv'd from *Bajazet*, prevent that mercy,
Which every subject of your fortune finds:
War is the province of ambitious man,
Who tears the miserable world for empire;
Whilst our weak sex, incapable of wrong,
On either side claims privilege of safety.

Tam. [*Raising her.*] Rise Royal maid, the pride of
haughty pow'r

Pays

Pays homage, not receives it from the fair ;
 Thy angry father fiercely calls me forth,
 And urges me unwillingly to arm ;
 Yet tho' our frowning battles menace death
 And mortal conflict, think not that we hold
 Thy innocence and virtue as our foe.
 Here, till the fate of *Asia* is decided,
 In safety stay. To-morrow is your own,
 Nor grieve for who may conquer, or who lose
 Fortune on either side shall wait thy wishes.

Sel. Where shall my wonder and my praise begin?
 From the successful labours of thy arms?
 Or from a theme more soft, and full of peace,
 Thy mercy, and thy gentleness? oh, *Tamerlane*!
 What can I pay thee for this noble usage
 But grateful praise? So Heav'n itself is paid.
 Give peace, ye pow'rs above, peace to mankind ;
 Nor let my father wage unequal war,
 Against the force of such united virtues.

Tam. Heav'n hear thy pious wish!—But since our
 Looks darkly on futurity, till fate [prospect
 Determine for us, let thy beauty's safety
 Be my *Axalla*'s care; in whose glad eyes
 I read what joy the pleasing service gives him.
 Is there amongst thy other pris'ners ought [*To Axalla.*
 Worthy our knowledge?

Axa. This brave man, my Lord,
 [Pointing to Monefes,
 With long resistance held the combat doubtful :
 His party, prest with numbers, soon grew faint,
 And would have left their charge an easy prey :
 Whilst he alone, undaunted at the odds,
 Tho' hopeless to escape, fought well and firmly :
 Nor yielded 'till o'er-match'd by many hands,
 He seem'd to shame our conquest, whilst he own'd it.

Tam. Thou speak'st him as a soldier should a soldier,
 Just to the worth he finds. I would not war
 [*To Monefes.*

With ought that wears thy virtuous stamp of greatness:
 Thy habit speaks thee Christian—Nay, yet more,
 My soul seems pleas'd to take acquaintance with thee,
 As if ally'd to thine: Perhaps 'tis sympathy
 Of honest minds; like strings wound up in music,
 Where

Where by one touch, both utter the same harmony:
Why art thou then a friend to *Bajazet*?
And why my enemy?

Mon. If human wisdom
Could point out every action of our lives,
And say, let it be thus, in spite of fate,
Or partial fortune, then I had not been
The wretch I am.

Tam. The brave meet every accident
With equal minds: Think nobler of thy foes,
Than to account thy chance in war an evil.

Mon. Far, far from that; I rather hold it grievous
That I was forc'd ev'n but to seem your enemy;
Nor think the baseness of a vanquish'd slave
Moves me to flatter for precarious life,
Or ill-bought freedom, when I swear by Heav'n!
Were I to choose from all mankind a master,
It should be *Tamerlane*.

Tam. A noble freedom
Dwells with the brave, unknown to fawning sycophants,
And claims a privilege of being believ'd.
I take thy praise as earnest of thy friendship.

Mon. Still you prevent the homage I should offer.
O royal Sir! let my misfortunes plead,
And wipe away the hostile mark I wore.
I was, when not long since my fortune hail'd me,
Bless'd to my wish, I was the Prince *Meneses*;
Born and bred up to greatness; witness the blood,
Which thro' successive heroes veins ally'd
To our *Greek* Emperors, roll'd down to me,
Feeds the bright fame of glory in my heart.

Tam. Ev'n that! that Princely tie should bind thee
If virtue were not more than all alliance.

Mon. I have a sister (Oh severe remembrance!)
Our noble house's, nay, her sex's pride:
Nor think my tongue too lavish, if I speak her
Fair as the fame of virtue, and yet chaste
As its cold precepts, wise beyond her sex
And blooming youth; soft as forgiving mercy,
Yet greatly brave, and jealous for her honour:
Such as she was, to say I barely lov'd her,
Is poor to my soul's meaning: From our infancy
There grew a mutual tenderness between us,

Till

'Till not long since her vows were kindly plighted
 To a young Lord, the equal of her birth.
 The happy day was fix'd and now approaching,
 When faithless *Bajazet* (upon whose honour,
 In solemn treaty giv'n, the *Greeks* depended)
 With sudden war broke in upon the country,
 Secure of peace, and for defence unready.

Tam. Let majesty no more be held divine,
 Since Kings, who are call'd Gods, profane themselves.

Mon. Among the wretches whom that deluge swept
 Away to slavery, myself and sister,
 Then passing near the frontiers to the court,
 (Which waited for her nuptials) were surpriz'd,
 And made the captives of the tyrant's power.
 Soon as we reach'd his court, we found our usage
 Beyond what we expected, fair and noble;
 'Twas then the storm of your victorious arms
 Look'd black, and seem'd to threaten, when he prest me
 (By oft repeating instances) to draw
 My sword for him: But when he found my soul
 Disdain'd his purpose, he more fiercely told me,
 That my *Arpasia*, my lov'd sister's fate
 Depended on my courage shewn for him.
 I had long learnt to hold myself at nothing;
 But for her sake, to ward the blow from her,
 I bound my service to the man I hated.
 Six days are past, since by the Sultan's order
 I left the pledge of my return behind,
 And went to guard this Princess to his camp:
 The rest the brave *Axalla*'s fortune tells you.

Tam. Wisely the tyrant strove, to prop his cause
 By leaguings with thy virtue: but just Heav'n
 Has torn thee from his side, and left him naked
 To the avenging bolt that drives upon him:
 Forget the name of captive, and I wish
 I could as well restore that fair one's freedom,
 Whose loss hangs heavy on thee: Yet ere night
 Perhaps we may deserve thy friendship nobler;
 Th' approaching storm may cast thy shipwreck'd wealth
 Back to thy arms: 'till that be past, since war
 (Tho' in the justest cause) is ever doubtful,
 I will not ask thy sword to aid my victory,

Lest it should hurt that hostage of thy valor
Our common foe detains.

Mon. Let *Bajazet*

Bend to his yoke repining slaves by force,
You, Sir, have found a nobler way to empire,
Lord of the willing world.

Tam. Oh, my *Axalla*!

Thou hast a tender soul, apt for compassion,
And art thyself a lover and a friend:
Does not this Prince's fortune move thy temper?

Axa. Yes, Sir, I mourn the brave *Monefes*' fate;
The merit of his virtue hardly match'd
With disadvantageous chance: Yet, Prince, allow me,
Allow me, from th' experience of a lover,
To say; one person, whom your story mention'd,
(If he survive) is far beyond you wretched:
You nam'd the bridegroom of your beautiful sister.

Mon. I did: Oh, most accurst!

Axa. Think what he feels,

Dash'd in the fierceness of his expectation;
Then when th' approaching minute of possession
Had wound imagination to the height,
Think if he lives! —

Mon. He lives, he does; 'tis true
He lives; but how? To be a dog, and dead,
Were Paradise to such a state as his:
He holds down life as children do a potion,
With strong reluctance and convulsive strugglings,
Whilst his misfortunes press him to disgorge it.

Tam. Spare the remembrance; 'tis an useless grief,
And adds to the misfortune by repeating it.
The revolution of a day may bring
Such turns, as Heav'n itself could scarce have promis'd,
Far, far beyond thy wish: Let that hope cheer thee.
Haste, my *Axalla* to dispose, with safety,
Thy beautiful charge, and on the foe revenge
The pain, which absence gives; thy other care
Honour and arms, now summon thy attendance;
Now do thy office well, my soul, remember
Thy cause; the cause of Heav'n and injur'd Earth.
O thou supreme! if thy great spirit warms
My glowing breast, and fires my soul to arms,

[*Exeunt.*]

Grant that my sword, assisted by thy pow'r
 This day may peace and happiness restore, [more. }
 That war and lawless rage may vex the world no }

[*Exeunt Tamerlane, Monefes, Stratocles, Prince of
 Tanais, Zama, Mirvan, and attendants.*

Manent Axalla, and Selima, with soldiers.

Axa. The battle calls, and bids me haste to leave
 Oh, *Selima*! — But let destruction wait: [thee;
 Are there not hours enough for blood and slaughter?
 This moment shall be love's, and I will waste it
 In soft complainings, for thy sighs and coldness,
 For thy forgetful coldness; even at *Birza*,
 When in thy father's court my eyes first own'd thee,
 Fairer than light, the joy of their beholding,
 Ev'n then thou wert not thus.

Sel. Art not thou chang'd,
 Christian *Axalla*? Art thou still the same?
 Those were the gentle hours of peace, and thou
 The world's good angel, that didst kindly join
 Its mighty masters in harmonious friendship:
 But since those joys, that once were ours, are lost,
 Forbear to mention 'em, and talk of war;
 Talk of thy conquest and my chains, *Axalla*.

Axa. Yet I will listen, fair unkind upbraider,
 Yet I will listen to thy charming accents,
 Altho' they make me curse my fame and fortune,
 My laurel-wreaths, and all the glorious trophies,
 For which the valiant bleed — Oh! thou unjust one,
 Dost thou then envy me this small return
 My niggard fate has made for all the mournings,
 For all the pains, for all the sleepless nights
 That cruel absence brings?

Sel. Away, deceiver!
 I will not hear thy soothing: Is it thus
 That Christian lovers prove the faith they swear?
 Are war and slavery the soft endearments
 With which they court the beauties they admire?
 'Twas well my heart was cautious of believing
 Thy vows, and thy protesting. Know, my conqueror,
 Thy sword has vanquish'd but the half of *Selima*,
 Her soul disdains thy victory.

Axa. Hear, sweet Heav'n,
 Hear the fair tyrant, how she wrests love's laws,
 As she had vow'd my ruin! What is conquest?

What joy have I from that, but to behold thee,
 To kneel before thee, and with lifted eyes
 To view thee, as devotion does a faint,
 With awful, trembling pleasure: Then to swear
 Thou art the Queen, and mistress of my soul?
 Has not ev'n *Tamerlane* (whose word next Heav'n's,
 Makes fate at second hand) bid thee disclaim
 Thy fears? And dost thou call thyself a slave?
 Only to try how far the sad impression
 Can sink into *Axalla*!

Sel. Oh *Axalla*!

Ought I to hear you?

Axa. Come back, ye hours,
 And tell my *Selima* what she has done!
 Bring back the time, when to her father's court
 I came ambassador of peace from *Tamerlane*;
 When hid by conscious darkness and disguise,
 I pass'd the dangers of the watchful guards;
 Bold as the youth who nightly swarm the *Hellspont*:
 Then, then she was not sworn the foe of love;
 When, as my soul confest its flame, and su'd
 In moving sounds for pity, she frown'd rarely,
 But, blushing, heard me tell the gentle tale:
 Nay, ev'n confest, and told me softly, sighing,
 She thought there was no guilt in love like mine.

Sel. Young, and unskilful in the world's false arts,
 I suffer'd love to steal upon my softness,
 And warm me with a lambent guiltless flame:
 Yes, I have heard thee swear a thousand times,
 And call the conscious pow'rs of Heav'n to witness
 The tend'rest, truest, everlasting passion:
 But, Oh! 'tis past; and I will charge remembrance
 To banish the fond image from my soul:
 Since thou art sworn the foe of royal *Bajazet*,
 I have resolv'd to hate thee.

Axa. Is it possible!

Hate is not in thy nature: thy whole frame
 Is harmony, without one jarring atom.
 Why dost thou force thy eyes to wear this coldness?
 It damps the springs of life. Oh! bid me die,
 Much rather bid me die, if it be true,
 That thou hast sworn to hate me.——

Sel. Let life and death

Wait

Wait the decision of the bloody field;
Nor can thy fate (my conqueror) depend
Upon a woman's hate. Yet since you urge
A pow'r, which once perhaps I had, there is
But one request, that I can make with honour.

Axa. Oh, name it! say!——

Sel. Forego your right of war,
And render me this instant to my father.

Axa. Impossible!——The tumult of the battle,
That hastes to join, cuts off all means of commerce
Betwixt the armies,

Sel. Swear then to perform it,
Which way foe'er the chance of war determines,
On my first instance.

Axa. By the sacred majesty
Of Heav'n, to whom we kneel, I will obey thee;
Yes, I will give thee this severest proof
Of my soul's vow'd devotion, I will part with thee;
(Thou cruel, to command it,) I will part with thee,
As wretches that are doubtful of hereafter,
Part with their lives, unwilling, loth and fearful,
And trembling at futurity. But is there nothing;
No small return that honour can afford
For all this waste of love?

Sel. The gifts of captives
Wear somewhat of constraint; and generous minds
Disdain to give, where freedom of the choice
Does but seem wanting.

Axa. What! not one kind look?
Then thou art chang'd indeed. * Hark I am summon'd,

[* *Trumpets.*

And thou wilt send me forth like one unblest'd;
Whom fortune has forsaken, and ill fate
Mark'd for destruction. Thy surprising coldness
Hangs on my soul, and weighs my courage down;
And the first feeble blow I meet shall raze me
From all remembrance: Nor is life or fame
Worthy my care, since I am lost to thee. [*Going.*

Sel. Ha! Goe'st thou to the fight!——

Axa. I do.—Farewel!——

Sel. What! and no more? A sigh heaves in my breast,
And stops the struggling accents on my tongue,
Else, sure, I should have added something more,

And made our parting softer.

Axa. Give it way:
The niggard honour, that affords not love,
Forbids not pity——

Sel. Fate perhaps has set
This day, the period of thy life, and conquests;
And I shall see thee borne at evening back,
A breathless corpse;—Oh! Can I think on that,
And hide my sorrows?—No—they will have way,
And all the vital air, that life draws in,
Is render'd back in sighs. [flame,

Axa. The murmur'ing gale revives the drooping
That at thy coldness languish'd in my breast;
So breathe the gentle zephyrs on the spring,
And waken every plant, and od'rous flower,
Which winter frost had blasted, to new life.

Sel. To see thee for this moment, and no more.—
Oh! help me to resolve against this tenderness,
That charms my fierce resentments, and presents thee
Not as thou art, mine and my father's foe,
But as thou wert, when first thy moving accents
Won me to hear; when, as I listen'd to thee,
The happy hours past by us unperceiv'd,
So was my soul fix'd to the soft enchantment.

Axa. Let me be still the same; I am, I must be.
If it were possible my heart could stray,
One look from thee would call it back again,
And fix the wanderer for ever thine.

Sel. Where is my boasted resolution now?

[Sinking into his arms.

Oh! Yes! Thou art the same; my heart joins with thee,
And to betray me will believe thee still;
It dances to the sounds that mov'd it first,
And owns at once the weakness of my soul:
So when some skilful artist strikes the strings,
The magic numbers rouse our sleeping passions,
And force us to confess our grief and pleasure.
Alas! *Axalla*, say—— dost thou not pity
My artless innocence, and easy fondness?
Oh! turn thee from me, or I die with blushing.

Axa. No——let me rather gaze, for ever gaze,
And bless the new-born glories that adorn thee;
From every blush, that kindles in thy cheeks,

Ten thousand little loves and graces spring,
To revel in the roses——'t wo' not be,' [*Trumpets.*
This envious trumpet calls, and tears me from thee—

Sel. My fears increase, and doubly press me now,
I charge thee, if thy sword comes cross my father,
Stop for a moment, and remember me.

Axa. Oh! doubt not, but his life shall be my care,
Ev'n dearer than my own——

Sel. Guard that for me too.

Axa. Oh! *Selima!* thou hast restor'd my quiet,
The noble ardour of the war, with love
Returning, brightly burns within my breast,
And bids me be secure of all hereafter.
So cheers some pious faint a dying sinner,
(Who trembled at the thought of pains to come)
With Heav'n's forgiveness, and the hopes of mercy;
At length the tumult of his soul appeas'd,
And every doubt and anxious scruple eas'd,
Boldly he proves the dark, uncertain road,
The peace, his holy comforter bestow'd,
Guides and protects him like a guardian God.

Manent Selima and guards.

[*Exit.*

Sel. In vain all arts a love-sick virgin tries,
Affects to frown, and seems severely wise,
In hopes to cheat the wary lover's eyes.
If the dear youth her pity strives to move,
And pleads with tenderness, the cause of love:
Nature asserts her empire in her heart,
And kindly takes the faithful lover's part.
By love, herself, and nature thus betray'd,
No more she trusts in pride's fantastic aid,
But bids her eyes confess the yielding maid.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE, Tamerlane's Camp.

Enter Monefes.

Mon. **T**HE dreadful business of the war is o'er;
And slaughter, that, from yester morn 'till
With giant steps, past striding o'er the field, [*ev'n,*
Besmear'd and horrid with the blood of nations,
Now weary sits among the mangled heaps,
And slumbers o'er her prey; while from this camp

The chearful sounds of victory, and *Tamerlane*,
 Beat the high arch of Heav'n: Deciding fate,
 That crowns him with the spoils of such a day,
 Has giv'n it as an earnest of the world
 That shortly shall be his.

Enter Stratocles.

My Stratocles!

Most happily return'd; might I believe
 Thou bring'st me any joy?

Stra. With my best diligence,
 This night I have enquir'd of what concerns you.
 Scarce was the sun, who shone upon the horror
 Of the past day, sunk to the western ocean,
 When by permission from the Prince *Axalla*,
 I mixt among the tumult of the warriors,
 Returning from the battle: Here a troop
 Of hardy *Parthians* red with honest wounds,
 Confest the conquest, they had well deserv'd:
 There a dejected crew of wretched captives,
 Sore with unprofitable hurts, and groaning
 Under new bondage, follow'd sadly after
 The haughty victor's heels; but that which fully
 Crown'd the success of *Tamerlane*, was *Bajazet*,
 Fall'n like the proud archangel, from the height,
 Where once (ev'n next to majesty divine)
 Enthron'd he sat, down to the vile descent
 And lowness of a slave; but oh! to speak
 The rage, the fierceness, and the indignation! —
 It bars all words, and cuts description short.

Mon. Then he is fall'n! that comet which on high,
 Portended ruin; he has spent his blaze,
 And shall distract the world with fears no more:
 Sure it must bode me well, for oft my soul
 Has started into tumult at his name,
 As if my guardian angel took th' alarm,
 At the approach of somewhat mortal to me:
 But say, my friend, what hear'st thou of *Arpasia*?
 For there my thoughts, my every care is center'd.

Stra. Tho' on that purpose still I bent my search,
 Yet nothing certain could I gain, but this,
 That in the pillage of the Sultan's tent
 Some women were made pris'ners, who this morning
 Were to be offer'd to the Emperor's view;

Their

Their names, and qualities, tho' oft enquiring,
I could not learn.

Mon. Then must my soul still labour
Beneath uncertainty, and anxious doubt,
The mind's worst state. The tyrant's ruin gives me
But a half-ease.

Stra. 'Twas said, not far from hence
The captives were to wait the Emperor's passage.

Mon. Haste we to find the place. Oh! my *Arpasia*!
Shall we not meet? Why hangs my heart thus heavy
Like death within my bosom? Oh! 'tis well,
The joy of meeting pays the pangs of absence,
Else who could bear it?
When thy lov'd sight shall bless my eyes again,
Then I will own, I ought not to complain,
Since that sweet hour is worth whole years of pain. }
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *The inside of a magnificent tent.*

Symphony of warlike music.

*Enter Tamerlane, Axalla, Prince of Tanais, Zama,
Mirvan, soldiers, and other attendants.*

Axa. FROM this auspicious day the *Parthian*
Shall date its birth of empire, and extend
Ev'n from the dawning East to utmost *Thule*
The limits of its sway. [name

Pr. Nations unknown,
Where yet the *Roman* eagles never flew,
Shall pay their homage to victorious *Tamerlane*,
Bend to his valour and superior virtue,
And own, that conquest is not giv'n by chance,
But, bound by fatal and resistless merit,
Waits on his arms.

Tam. It is too much : you dress me
Like an usurper in the borrow'd attributes
Of injur'd Heav'n : Can we call conquest ours?
Shall man, this pigmy, with a giant's pride
Vaunt of himself, and say, thus have I done this?
Oh! vain pretence to greatness! Like the moon,

We borrow all the brightness, which we boast,
 Dark in ourselves, and useless. If that hand
 That rules the fate of battles strike for us,
 Crown us with fame, and gild our clay with honour;
 'Twere most ungrateful to disown the benefit,
 And arrogate a praise which is not ours.

Axa. With such unshaken temper of the soul
 To bear the swelling tide of prosperous fortune,
 Is to deserve that fortune: In adversity
 The mind grows tough by buffeting the tempest;
 Which, in success dissolving, sinks to ease,
 And loses all her firmness.

Tam. Oh! *Axalla!*

Could I forget I am a man, as thou art,
 Would not the winter's cold or summer's heat,
 Sickness, or thirst, and hunger, all the train
 Of nature's clamorous appetites, asserting
 An equal right in Kings and common men,
 Reprove me daily?—No—if I boast of ought,
 Be it, to have been Heav'n's happy instrument,
 The means of good to all my fellow creatures!
 This is a King's best praise.

Enter Omar.

Om. Honour and fame [*Bowing to Tamerlane.*
 For ever wait the Emperor! May our Prophet
 Give him ten thousand thousand days of life,
 And every day like this. The captive Sultan,
 Fierce in his bonds, and at his fate repining,
 Attends your sacred will.

Tam. Let him approach.

*Enter Bajazet and other Turkish prisoners in chains,
 with a guard of soldiers.*

When I survey the ruins of this field,
 The wild destruction, which thy fierce ambition
 Has dealt among mankind (so many widows
 And helpless orphans has thy battle made,
 That half our Eastern world this day are mourners)
 Well may I, in behalf of Heav'n and Earth,
 Demand from thee atonement for this wrong.

Baj. Make thy demand to those that own thy pow'r,
 Know, I am still beyond it; and tho' fortune
 (Curse on that changeling Deity of fools!)
 Has stript me of the train and poms of greatness,

That

That out-side of a King, yet still my soul,
 Fixt high, and of itself alone dependant,
 Is ever free and royal, and ev'n now,
 As at the head of battle does defy thee :
 I know what pow'r the chance of war has giv'n
 And dare thee to the use on't. This vile speeching,
 This after game of words, is what most irks me ;
 Spare that, and for the rest 'tis equal all ———
 Be it as it may.

Tam. Well was it for the world,
 When on their borders neighbouring Princes met,
 Frequent in friendly parle, by cool debates
 Preventing wasteful war ; such should our meeting
 Have been, had'st thou but held in just regard
 The sanctity of leagues so often sworn to.
 Canst thou believe thy prophet, or, what's more
 That pow'r Supreme, which made thee, and thy prophet,
 Will, with impunity let pass that breach
 Of sacred faith giv'n to the royal *Greek* ?

Baj. Thou pedant talker ? ha ! art thou a King
 Possess of sacred power, Heav'n's darling attribute,
 And dost thou prate of leagues, and oaths, and prophets ?
 I hate the *Greek* (perdition on his name !)
 As I do thee, and would have met you both,
 As death does human nature, for destruction.

Tam. Causeless to hate is not of human kind ;
 The savage brute, that haunts in woods remote,
 And desert wilds, tears not the fearful traveller,
 If hunger, or some injury, provoke not.

Baj. Can a King want a cause when empire bids
 Go on ? what is he born for but ambition ?
 It is his hunger, 'tis his call of nature,
 The noble appetite which will be satisfy'd,
 And like the food of Gods, make him immortal.

Tam. Henceforth I will not wonder we were foes,
 Since souls that differ so, by nature hate,
 And strong antipathy forbids their union.

Baj. The noble fire that warms me does indeed
 Transcend thy coldness ; I am pleas'd we differ,
 Nor think alike.

Tam. No — for I think like man,
 Thou like a monster ; from whose baleful presence
 Nature starts back ; and tho' she fix'd her stamp
 On thy rough mass, and mark'd thee for a man,

Now conscious of her error she disclaims thee,
As form'd for her destruction.——

'Tis true, I am a King, as thou hast been :
Honour, and glory too have been my aim ;
But tho' I dare face death, and all the dangers,
Which furious war wears in its bloody front,
Yet would I chuse to fix my name by peace,
By justice, and by mercy ; and to raise
My trophies on the blessings of mankind ;
Nor would I buy the empire of the world
With ruin of the people whom I sway,
On forfeit of my honour.

Baj. Prophet, I thank thee.——
Damnation !—— Couldst thou rob me of my glory,
To dress up this tame King, this preaching *Dervise* ?
Unfit for war, thou shouldst have liv'd secure
In lazy peace, and with debating senates
Shar'd a precarious scepter, sat tamely still,
And let bold factions canton out thy pow'r,
And wrangle for the spoils they robb'd thee of ;
Whilst I (curse on the pow'r that stops my ardour !)
Would, like a tempest, rush amidst the nations,
Be greatly terrible, and deal, like *Alba*,
My angry thunder on the frightened world.

Tam. The world !—— 'twould be too little for thy pride :
Thou would'st scale Heav'n.——

Baj. I would :—Away ! my soul
Disdains thy conference.

Tam. Thou vain, rash thing,
That, with gigantic insolence, hast dar'd
To lift thy wretched self above the stars,
And mate with pow'r almighty : Thou art fall'n !

Baj. 'Tis false ! I am not fall'n from ought I've
At least my soul resolves to keep her state, [been :
And scorns to take acquaintance with ill fortune.

Tam. Almost beneath my pity art thou fall'n ;
Since, while th' avenging hand of Heav'n is on thee,
And presses to the dust thy swelling soul,
Fool-hardy, with the stronger thou contendest ;
To what vast heights had thy tumultuous temper
Been hurry'd, if success had crown'd thy wishes ;
Say, what had I to expect, if thou had'st conquer'd ?

Baj. Oh, glorious thought ! By Heav'n ! I will en-
Tho' but in fancy ; imagination shall [joy it,
Make

Make room to entertain the vast idea.

Oh! had I been the master but of yesterday,
The world, the world had felt me; and for thee,
I had us'd thee, as thou art to me,—a dog,
The object of my scorn, and mortal hatred:
I would have taught thy neck to know my weight,
And mounted from that footstool to my saddle;
Then, when thy daily servile task was done,
I would have cag'd thee, for the scorn of slaves,
'Till thou hadst begg'd to die; and ev'n that mercy
I had deny'd thee: Now thou know'st my mind,
And question me no further.

Tam. Well dost thou teach me

What justice should exact from thee: Mankind
With one consent cry out for vengeance on thee;
Loudly they call, to cut off this league breaker,
This wild destroyer, from the face of earth.

Baj. Do it, and rid thy shaking soul at once
Of its worst fear.

Tam. Why slept the thunder,
That should have arm'd the idol Deity,
And giv'n thee pow'r, ere yester sun was set,
To shake the soul of *Tamerlane*: Hadst thou an arm
To make thee fear'd, thou should'st have prov'd it on
Amidst the sweat and blood of yonder field, [me,
When, thro' the tumult of the war, I fought thee,
Fenc'd in with nations.

Baj. Curse upon the stars,
That fated us to different scenes of slaughter!
Oh! could my sword have met thee!——

Tam. Thou hast then
As now, been in my pow'r, and held thy life
Dependant on my gift——Yes, *Bajazet*,
I bid thee live.——So much my soul disdains,
That thou should'st think, I can fear ought but Heav'n:
Nay more; could'st thou forget thy brutal fierceness,
And form thyself to manhood, I would bid thee,
Live, and be still a King, that thou may'st learn
What man should be to man, in war rememb'ring
The common-tye, and brotherhood of kind.
This royal tent, with such of thy domestics
As can be found, shall wait upon thy service;

Nor will I use my fortune, to demand
Hard terms of peace, but such as thou may'st offer
With honour, I with honour may receive.*

[*Tamerlane signs to an officer, who unbinds
Bajazet. [blast me,

Baj. Ha! say'st thou—no!—our Prophet's vengeance
If thou shalt buy my friendship with thy empire.
Damnation on thee! thou smooth fawning talker!
Give me again my chains, that I may curse thee,
And gratify my rage: Or, if thou wilt
Be a vain fool, and play with thy perdition,
Remember I'm thy foe, and hate thee deadly.
Thy folly on thy head!

Tam. Be still my foe.

Great minds (like Heav'n) are pleas'd in doing good,
Tho' the ungrateful subjects of their favours
Are barren in return: Thy stubborn pride,
That spurns the gentle office of humanity,
Shall in my honour own, and thy despise,
I have done, as I ought. Virtue still does
With scorn the mercenary world regard,
Where abject souls do good, and hope reward:
Above the worthless trophies men can raise,
She seeks not honours, wealth, nor airy praise,
But with herself, herself, the goddess pays. }

[*Exeunt* Tamerlane, Axalla, Prince of Tanais,
Mirvan, Zama, and attendants.

Remain Bajazet, Omar, Guards.

Baj. Come, lead me to my dungeon; plunge me
Deep from the hated sight of man, and day, [down
Where, under covert of the friendly darkness,
My soul may brood, at leisure, o'er its anguish.

Om. Our royal master would, with noble usage,
Make your misfortunes light: he bids you hope,——

Baj. I tell thee, slave, I have shook hands with hope,
And all my thoughts are rage, despair, and horror.

Enter Haly, Arpasia, and women attendants.

Ha! wherefore am I thus?——Perdition seize me!
But my cold blood runs shiv'ring to my heart,
As at some phantom, that in dead of night,
With dreadful action stalks around our beds.
The rage and fiercer passions of my breast
Are lost in new confusion.——*Arpasia!*——*Haly!*

Ha.

Ha. Oh Emperor! for whose hard fate our Prophet,
 And all the heroes of thy sacred race
 Are sad in Paradise, thy faithful *Haly*,
 The slave of all thy pleasures, in this ruin,
 This universal shipwreck of thy fortunes,
 Has gather'd up this treasure for thy arms:
 Nor ev'n the victor, haughty *Tamerlane*,
 (By whose command, once more thy slave beholds thee)
 Denies this blessing to thee, but with honour
 Renders thee back thy Queen, thy beauteous bride.

Baj. Oh! had her eyes, with pity, seen my sorrows,
 Had she the softness of a tender bride,
 Heav'n could not have bestow'd a greater blessing,
 And love had made amends for loss of empire.
 But see, what fury dwells upon her charms!
 What lightning flashes from her angry eyes!
 With a malignant joy she views my ruin:
 Ev'n beauteous in her hatred, still she charms me,
 And awes my fierce tumultuous soul to love.

Arp. And dar'st thou hope, thou tyrant! ravisher?
 That Heav'n has any joy in store for thee?
 Look back upon the sum of thy past life,
 Where tyranny, oppression, and injustice,
 Perjury, murders, swell the black account,
 Where lost *Arpasia's* wrongs stand bleeding fresh,
 Thy last recorded crime; but Heav'n has found thee,
 At length the tardy vengeance has o'erta'en thee.
 My weary soul shall bear a little longer
 The pain of life, to call for justice on thee;
 That once complete, sink to the peaceful grave,
 And lose the mem'ry of my wrongs and thee.

Baj. Thou rail'st! I thank thee for it—Be perverse,
 And muster all the woman in thy soul;
 Goad me with curses, be a very wife,
 That I may fling off this tame love, and hate thee.

Enter Monefes. [Bajazet starting.]
Ha!—Keep thy temper, heart! nor take alarm
 At a slave's presence.

Mon. It is *Arpasia!*——Leave me, thou cold fear.
 Sweet as the rosy morn she breaks upon me,
 And sorrow like the night's unwholsome shade,
 Gives way before the golden dawn she brings

Baj.

Baj. [*Advancing towards him.*] Ha, Christian! Is it well that we meet thus?

Is this thy faith?

Mon. Why does thy frowning brow
Put on this form of fury? Is it strange
We should meet here companions in misfortune,
The captives of one common chance of war?
Nor should'st thou wonder, that my sword has fail'd
Before the fortune of victorious *Tamerlane*,
When thou with nations, like the sandèd shore,
With half the warring world upon thy side,
Could'st not stand up against his dreadful battle,
That crush'd thee with its shock. Thy men can witness,
Those cowards that forsook me in the combat,
My sword was not unactive.

Baj. No, ——— 'tis false,
Where is my daughter, thou vile *Greek*? thou hast
Betray'd her to the *Tartar*; or ev'n worse,
Pale with thy fears, didst lose her like a coward:
And like a coward now, wouldst cast the blame
On fortune, and ill stars.

Mon. Ha! said'st thou like a coward?
What factity, what majesty divine
Hast thou put on, to guard thee from my rage?
That thus thou dar'st to wrong me.

Baj. Out, thou slave,
And know me for thy Lord ———

Mon. I tell thee, tyrant,
When in the pride of pow'r thou sat'st on high,
When like an idol thou wert vainly worshipp'd,
By prostrate wretches, born with slavish souls:
Ev'n when thou wert a King, thou wert not more,
Nor greater than *Meneses*; born of a race,
Royal, and great as thine: What art thou now then?
The fate of war has set thee with the lowest;
And captives (like the subjects of the grave)
Losing distinction, serve one common Lord.

Baj. Brav'd by this dog! now give a loose to rage,
And curse thyself, curse thy false cheating Prophet.
Ha! yet there's some revenge. Hear me, thou Christian:
Thou lef't'st that sister with me: ——— Thou impostor!
Thou boaster of thy honesty! Thou liar!
But take her to thee back.

Now

Now to explore thy prison——If it holds
 Another plague like this, the restless damn'd
 (If *Musties* lye not) wander thus in hell :
 From scorching flames to chilling frosts they run,
 Then from their frosts to fires return again,
 And only prove variety of pain.

[*Exeunt Bajazet and Haly.*]

Arp. Stay, *Bajazet*, I charge thee by my wrongs !
 Stay, and unfold a tale of so much horror,
 As only fits thy telling —— Oh, *Moneses* !

Mon. Why dost thou weep ? why this tempestuous
 passion,
 That stops thy falt'ring tongue short on my name ?
 Oh, speak ! unveil this mystery of sorrow,
 And draw the dismal scene, at once to sight.

Arp. Thou art undone, lost, ruin'd, and undone !

Mon. I will not think 'tis so, while I have thee,
 While thus 'tis giv'n to fold thee in my arms ;
 For while I sigh upon thy panting bosom,
 The sad remembrance of past woes is lost.

Arp. Forbear to sooth thy soul with flatt'ring
 thoughts

Of evils overpast, and joys to come :
 Our woes are like the genuine shade beneath,
 Where fate cuts off the very hopes of day,
 And everlasting night and horror reign.

Mon. By all the tenderness, and chaste endearments
 Of our past love, I charge thee, my *Arpasia*,
 To ease my soul of doubts ; give me to know
 At once the utmost malice of my fate.

Arp. Take then thy wretched share in all I suffer,
 Still partner of my heart. Scarce hadst thou left
 The Sultan's camp, when the imperious tyrant,
 Soft'ning the pride and fierceness of his temper,
 With gentle speech made offer of his love,
 Amaz'd, as at the shock of sudden death,
 I started into tears, and often urg'd
 (Tho' still in vain) the difference of our faiths :
 At last, as flying to the utmost refuge,
 With lifted hands, and streaming eyes, I own'd
 The fraud ; which when we first were made his pris'ners,
 Conscious of my unhappy form, and fearing
 For thy dear life, I forc'd thee to put on

Thy

Thy borrow'd name of brother, mine of sister :
 Hiding beneath that veil the nearer tie,
 Our mutual vows had made before the priest.
 Kindling to rage at hearing of my story,
 Then, be it so, he cry'd. Think'st thou thy vows
 Giv'n to a slave shall bar me from thy beauties ?
 Then bade the priest pronounce the marriage rites,
 Which he perform'd, whilst shrieking with despair,
 I call'd in vain the Pow'rs of Heav'n to aid me.

Mon. Villain ! Imperial villain ! — Oh, the coward !
 Aw'd by his guilt, tho' back'd by force and power,
 He durst not to my face avow his purpose ;
 But in my absence like a lurking thief
 Stole on my treasure, and at once undid me.

Arp. Had they not kept me from the means of death,
 Forgetting all the rules of Christian suffering,
 I had done a desp'rate murder on my soul,
 Ere the rude slaves, that waited on his will
 Had forc'd me to his ———

Mon. Stop thee there, *Arpasia*,
 And bar my fancy from the guilty scene ;
 Let not thought enter, lest the busy mind
 Should muster such a train of monstrous images,
 As would distract me. Oh ! I cannot bear it
 Thou lovely hoard of sweets, where all my joys
 Were treasur'd up, to have thee rifled thus !
 Thus torn untasted from my eager wishes !
 But I will have thee from him. *Tamerlane*
 (The Sovereign judge of equity on earth)
 Shall do me justice on this mighty robber,
 And render back thy beauties to *Moneses*.

Arp. And who shall render back my peace, my honour,
 The spotless whiteness of my virgin soul ?
 Ah ! no, *Moneses* — think not I will ever
 Bring a polluted love to thy chaste arms :
 I am the tyrant's wife, Oh, fatal title !
 And, in the sight of all the saints, have sworn,
 By honour, womanhood, and blushing shame,
 To know no second bride-bed but my grave,

Mon. I swear it must not be, since still my eye
 Finds thee as heav'nly white, as angel pure,
 As in the earliest hours of life thou wert.
 Nor art thou his but mine ; thy first vows are mine,
 Thy soul is mine ———

Arp.

Arp. Oh ! think not that the pow'r
Of most persuasive eloquence can make me
Forget I've been another's, been his wife ;
Now by my blushes ! by the strong confusion,
And anguish of my heart ! spare me, *Monefes*,
Nor urge my trembling virtue to the precipice.
Shortly, (oh very shortly) if my sorrows
Divine aright, and Heav'n be gracious tome,
Death shall dissolve the fatal obligation,
And give me up to peace, to that blest place
Where the good rest from care and anxious life.

Mon. Oh ! teach me, thou fair faint, like thee to suffer ;
Teach me, with hardy piety, to combat
The present ills ; instruct my eyes to pass
The narrow bounds of life, this land of sorrow,
And with bold hopes to view the realms beyond,
Those distant beauties of the future state.
Tell me, *Arpasia*,—say, what joys are those,
That wait to crown the wretch, who suffers here,
Oh ! tell me, and sustain my failing faith.

Arp. Imagine somewhat exquisitely fine,
Which fancy cannot paint, which the pleas'd mind
Can barely know, unable to describe it ;
Imagine, 'tis a tract of endless joys,
Without satiety, or interruption ;
Imagine 'tis to meet, and part no more.

Mon. Grant, gentle Heav'n, that such may be our lot ?
Let us be blest together.—Oh ! my soul ;
Build on that hope, and let it arm thy courage,
To struggle with the storm that parts us now.

Arp. Yes ! my *Monefes*, now the surges rise,
The swelling sea breaks in between our barks,
And drives us to our fate on different rocks.
Farewel——my soul lives with thee.——

Mon. Death is parting,
'Tis the last sad adieu 'twixt soul and body,
But this is somewhat worse—my joy, my comfort,
All that was left in life, fleets after thee.
My aking sight hangs on thy parting beauties,
Thy lovely eyes all drown'd in floods of sorrow !
So sinks the setting sun beneath the waves,
And leaves the traveller in pathless woods,
Benighted and forlorn—Thus with sad eyes

West

Westward he turns, to mark the light's decay,
Till having lost the last faint glimpse of day,
Chearless, in darkness, he pursues his way.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE, *The inside of the royal tent.*

Enter Axalla, Selima, and women attendants.

Axa. CAN there be ought in love, beyond this
proof,

This wondrous proof, I give thee of my faith?
To tear thee from my bleeding bosom thus?
To rend the strings of life, to set thee free,
And yield thee to a cruel father's power,
Foe to my hopes? What canst thou pay me back,
What but thyself (thou angel) for this fondness?

Sel. Thou dost upbraid me, beggar as I am,
And urge me with my poverty of love.
Perhaps thou think'st, 'tis nothing for a maid
To struggle through the niceness of herself,
The blushes and the fears, and own she loves:
Thou think'st, 'tis nothing for my artless heart
To own my weakness and confess thy triumph.

Axa. Oh! yes, I own it; my charm'd ears ne'er knew
A sound of so much rapture, so much joy.
Not voices, instruments, not warbling birds,
Not winds, not murmur'ing waters join'd in consort,
Not tuneful nature, not th' according spheres
Utter such harmony, as when my *Selima*
With down-cast looks, and blushes, said,—I love——

Sel. And yet thou say'st I am a niggard to thee:
I swear the balance shall be held between us,
And love be judge, if after all the tenderness,
Tears and confusion of my virgin soul,
Thou should'st complain of ought, unjust *Axalla!*

Axa. Why was I ever blest!—Why is remembrance
Rich with a thousand pleasing images
Of past enjoyments, since 'tis but to plague me?
When thou art mine no more, what will it ease me

To

To think of all the golden minutes past,
 To think that thou wert kind, and I was happy,
 But, like an angel fall'n from bliss, to curse
 My present state, and mourn the heav'n I've lost?

Sel. Hope better for us both; nor let thy fears,
 Like an unlucky omen, cross my way.
 My father, rough and stormy in his nature,
 To me was always gentle, and with fondness
 Paternal, ever met me with a blessing.
 Oft, when offence had stirr'd him to such fury,
 That not grave counsellors for wisdom fam'd,
 Nor hardy captains that had fought his battles,
 Presum'd to speak, but struck with awful dread,
 Were hush'd as death; yet has he smil'd on me,
 Kiss'd me, and bade me utter all my purpose,
 Till with my idle prattle I had sooth'd him,
 And won him from his anger.

Axa. Oh! I know
 Thou hast a tongue to charm the wildest tempers.
 Herds would forget to graze, and savage beasts
 Stand still and lose their fierceness, but to hear thee,
 As if they had reflexion, and by reason
 Forsook a less enjoyment for a greater.
 But oh! when I revolve each circumstance,
 My Christian faith, my service closely bound
 To *Tamerlane* my master, and my friend:
 Tell me (my charmer) if my fears are vain?
 Think what remains for me, if the fierce Sultan
 Should doom thy beauties to another's bed?

Sel. 'Tis a sad thought; but to appease thy doubts,
 Here in the awful sight of Heav'n, I vow,
 No Pow'r shall e'er divide me from thy love,
 Ev'n duty shall not force me to be false.
 My cruel stars may tear thee from my arms,
 But never from my heart; and when the maids
 Shall yearly come with garlands of fresh flow'rs,
 To mourn with pious office o'er my grave,
 They shall sit sadly down, and weeping tell,
 How well I lov'd, how much I suffer'd for thee,
 And, while they grieve my fate, shall praise my
 constancy.

Axa. But see the Sultan comes!—my beating heart
 Bounds with exulting motion; hope and fear
 Fight with alternate conquest in my breast.

Oh!

Oh ! Can I give her from me ? Yield her up ?
Now mourn, thou God of Love, since honour triumphs,
And crowns his cruel altars with thy spoils.

Enter Bajazet.

Baj. To have a nauseous courtesy forc'd on me
Spite of my will by an insulting foe, —
Ha ! they would break the fierceness of my temper,
And make me supple for their slavish purpose :
Curse on their fawning arts ; from Heav'n itself
I wou'd not on such terms receive a benefit,
But spurn it back upon the giver's hand.

[Selima comes forward and kneels to Bajazet.]

Sel. My Lord ; my royal father !

Baj. Ha ! what art thou ?

What heavenly innocence ? that in a form
So known, so lov'd, has left thy Paradise,
For joyless prison, for this place of woe ?
Art thou *Selima* ?

Sel. Have you forgot me ?

Alas, my piety is then in vain ;
Your *Selima*, your daughter whom you lov'd,
The fondling once of her dear father's arms,
Is come to claim her share in his misfortunes ;
To wait and tend him with obsequious duty ;
To sit, and weep for every care he feels ;
To help to wear the tedious minutes out,
To soften bondage, and the loss of empire.

Baj. Now by our Prophet ! If my wounded mind
Could know a thought of peace, it would be now ;
Ev'n from thy prating infancy thou wert
My joy, my little angel, smiling comfort
Came with thee still to glad me : Now I'm curs'd ;
Ev'n in thee too ; reproach and infamy
Attend the Christian dog, to whom thou wert trusted :
To see thee here ! — 'twere better see thee dead.

Axa. Thus *Tamerlane* to royal *Bajazet*,
With Kingly greeting sends : Since with the brave,
(The bloody bus'ness of the fight once ended)
Stern hate and opposition ought to cease ;
Thy Queen already to thy arms restor'd,
Receive this second gift, thy beauteous daughter :
And if there be ought farther in thy wish,

De-

Demand with honour, and obtain it freely.

Baj. Bear back thy fulsome greeting to thy master,
Tell him, I'll none on't: Had he been a God,
All his omnipotence could not restore
My fame diminish'd, loss of sacred honour,
The radiancy of majesty eclips'd:
For aught besides, it is not worth my care;
The giver and his gifts are both beneath me.

Axa. Enough of war the wounded earth has
known;

Weary at length, and wasted with destruction,
Sadly she rears her ruin'd head, to shew
Her cities humbled, and her countries spoil'd,
And to her mighty masters sues for peace.
Oh, Sultan! by the Pow'r Divine I swear!
With joy I would resign the savage trophies
In blood and battle gain'd, could I atone
The fatal breach 'twixt thee and *Tamerlane*;
And think a soldier's glory well bestow'd,
To buy mankind a peace.

Baj. And what art thou?
That dost presume to mediate 'twixt rage
Of angry Kings?

Axa. A Prince, born of the noblest,
And of a soul that answers to that birth,
That dares not but do well. Thou dost put on
A forc'd forgetfulness, thus not to know me,
A guest so lately to thy court, then meeting
On gentler terms.—

Sel. Could aught efface the merit
Of brave *Axalla's* name, yet when your daughter
Shall tell, how well, how nobly she was us'd,
How light this gallant Prince made all her bondage,
Most sure the royal *Bajazet* will own
That honour stands indebted to such goodness,
Nor can a Monarch's friendship more than pay it.

Baj. Ha! know'st thou that, fond girl?—Go—'tis
not well

And when thou could'st descend to take a benefit
From a vile Christian, and thy father's foe,
Thou didst an act dishonest to thy race;
Henceforth, unless thou mean'st to cancel all

My

My share in thee, and write thyself a bastard,
Die, starve, know any evil, any pain,
Rather than taste a mercy from these dogs.

Sel. Alas! *Axalla!*

Axa. Weep not, lovely maid;
I swear, one pearly drop from those fair eyes
Would over-pay the service of my life;
One sigh from thee has made a large amends
For all thy angry father's frowns and fierceness.

Baj. Oh, my curs'd fortune!—am I fall'n thus low?
Dishonour'd to my face! thou earth-born thing!
Thou clod! how hast thou dar'd to lift thy eyes
Up to the sacred race of mighty *Ottoman*,
Whom King's, whom ev'n our Prophet's holy offspring
At distance have beheld; and what art thou?
What glorious titles blazon out thy birth?
Thou vile obscurity? Ha!—say—thou base one.

Axa. Thus challeng'd, virtue, modest as she is,
Stands up to do herself a common justice,
To answer, and assert that inborn merit,
That worth, which conscious to herself she feels.
Were honour to be scann'd by long descent,
From ancestors illustrious, I could vaunt
A lineage of the greatest, and recount
Among my fathers, names of ancient story,
Heroes and god-like patriots, who subdu'd
The world by arms and virtue, and being *Romans*
Scorn'd to be Kings; but that be their own praise:
Nor will I borrow merit from the dead,
Myself an undeserver. I could prove
My friendship such, as thou might deign t'accept
With honour, when it comes with friendly office,
To render back thy crown, and former greatness:
And yet ev'n this, ev'n all is poor, when *Salima*
With matchless worth weighs down the adverse scale.

Baj. To give me back what yesterday took from me,
Wou'd be to give like Heav'n, when having finish'd
This world, (the goodly work of his creation)
He bid his fav'rite man be Lord of all.
But this——

Axa. Nor is this gift beyond my pow'r;
Oft has the mighty master of my arms
Urg'd me with large ambition to demand

Crowns

Crowns and dominions from his bounteous pow'r :
 'Tis true I wav'd the proffer, and have held it
 The worthier choice, to wait upon his virtues,
 To be the friend and partner of his wars,
 Than to be *Asia's* Lord : Nor wonder then,
 If in the confidence of such a friendship,
 I promise boldly for the royal giver,
 Thy crown, and empire.

Baj. For our daughter thus
 Mean'st thou to barter ? ha ! I tell thee, Christian,
 There is but one, one dowry, thou canst give,
 And I can ask, worthy of my daughter's love.

Axa. Oh name the mighty ransom, task my pow'r,
 Let there be danger, difficulty, death,
 T' enhance the price.

Baj. I take thee at thy word.
 Bring me the *Tartar's* head.

Axa. Ha !

Baj. *Tamerlane's*,
 That death, that deadly poison to my glory.

Axa. Prodigious ! Horrid !

Sel. Lost ! for ever lost ?

Baj. And coul'dst thou hope to bribe me with ought
 else ?

With a vile peace patch'd up on slavish terms ?
 With tributary Kingship ?—No—To merit
 A recompence from me, fate my revenge.
 The *Tartar* is my bane, I cannot bear him ;
 One Heav'n and earth can never hold us both ;
 Still shall we hate, and with defiance deadly
 Keep rage alive, till one be lost for ever ;
 As if two suns should meet in the meridian,
 And strive in fiery combat for the passage.
 Weep'st thou, fond girl ? Now as thy King, and father,
 I charge thee drive this slave from thy remembrance :
 Hate shall be pious in thee ; * come and join

* [*Laying hold on her hand.*]

To curse thy father's foes.

Sel. Undone for ever !

Now tyrant duty, art thou yet obey'd ?
 There is no more to give thee. Oh *Axalla* !

[*Bajazet leads out Selima, she looking back on
 Axalla.*]

Axa. 'Tis what I feard ; Fool that I was t'obey :
 The

The coward love, that could not bear her frown,
 Has wrought his own undoing. Perhaps ev'n now,
 The tyrant's rage prevails upon her fears.
 Fiercely he storms, she weeps, and sighs and trembles,
 But swears at length, to think on me no more.
 He bade me take her. But, oh gracious honour!
 Upon what terms? My soul yet shudders at it,
 And stands but half recovered of her fright.
 The head of *Tamerlane*! monstrous impiety!
 Bleed, bleed to death, my heart, be virtue's martyr.
 Oh, Emperor, I own I ought to give thee
 Some nobler mark, than dying of my faith.
 Then let the pains I feel my friendship prove,
 'Tis easier for to die, than cease to love.

[Exit.

SCENE, *Tamerlane's Camp.*

Enter severally Monefes, and Prince of Tanais,

Mon. IF I not press untimely on his leisure, [service,
 You would much bind a stranger to your
 To give me means of audience from the Emperor,

Pr. Most willingly, tho' for the present moment
 We must intreat your stay; he holds him private.

Mon. His council, I presume.

Pr. No; the affair

Is not of Earth, but Heav'n — a holy man,
 (One whom our Prophet's law calls such a *Dervise*
 Keeps him in conference.

Mon. Hours of religion
 Especially of Princes, claim a reverence,
 Nor will be interrupted.

Pr. What his business
 Imports, we know not: but with earnest suite
 This morn he begg'd admittance. Our great master
 (Than whom none bows more lowly to high Heav'n)
 In reverend regard holds all that bear
 Relation to religion, and, on notice
 Of his request, receiv'd him on the instant.

Mon. We will attend his pleasure,

Exeunt.
Enter

Enter Tamerlane and a Dervise.

Tam. Thou bring'st me thy credentials from the Highest,
From *Alba* and our Prophet: Speak thy message,
It must import the best and noblest ends, [thee

Der. Thus speaks our holy *Mahomet*, who hast giv'n
To reign, and conquer: Ill dost thou repay
The bounties of his hand, unmindful of
The fountain whence thy streams of greatness flow;
Thou hast forgot high Heav'n, hast beaten down
And trampled on religion's sanctity.

Tam. Now as I am a soldier and a King,
(The greatest names of honour) do but make
Thy imputation out, and *Tamerlane*
Shall do thee ample justice on himself.
So much the sacred name of Heaven awes me,
Could I suspect my soul of harbouring aught
To its dishonour, I would search it strictly,
And drive th' offending thought with fury forth.

Der. Yes, thou hast hurt our holy Prophet's honour,
By fostering the pernicious Christian sect;
Those, whom his sword pursu'd with fell destruction,
Thou tak'st into thy bosom, to thy councils;
They are thy only friends. The true believers
Mourn to behold thee favour this *Axalla*.

Tam. I fear me, thou out-go'st the Prophet's order,
And bring'st his venerable name to shelter
A rudeness ill-becoming thee to use,
Or me to suffer. When thou nam'st my friend,
Thou nam'st a man beyond a Monk's discerning,
Virtuous and great, a warrior and a Prince.

Der. He is a Christian; there our law condemns him,
Altho' he were ev'n all thou speak'st, and more.

Tam. 'Tis false; no law divine condemns the virtuous,
For differing from the rules your schools devise.
Look round, how Providence bestows alike
Sun-shine and rain, to bless the fruitful year,
On different nations, all of different faiths;
And (tho' by several names and titles worship'd)
Heav'n takes the various tribute of their praise;
Since all agree to own, at least to mean,
One best, one greatest, only Lord of all:
Thus when he view'd the many forms of nature,
He found that all was good, and blest the fair variety.

Der. Most impious and profane !—Nay, frown not,
Full of the Prophet, I despise the danger [Prince ;
Thy angry power may threaten. I command thee
To hear and to obey ; since thus says Mahomet :
Why have I made thee dreadful to the nations ?
Why have I giv'n thee conquest ; but to spread
My sacred law ev'n to the utmost earth.
And make my holy Mecca the world's worship ?
Go on, and wheresoe'er thy arms shall prosper,
Plant there the Prophet's name : with sword and fire
Drive out all other faiths, and let the world
Confess him only.

Tam. Had he but commanded
My sword to conquer all, to make the world
Know but one Lord, the task were not so hard ;
'Twere but to do what has been done already ;
And Philip's son, and Cæsar did as much ;
But to subdue th' unconquerable mind,
'To make one reason have the same effect
Upon all apprehensions ; to force this
Or this man just to think as thou and I do ;
Impossible ! unless souls were alike
In all, which differ now like human faces.

Der. Well might the holy cause be carried on,
If Mussulmen did not make war on Mussulmen.
Why hold'st thou captive a believing Monarch ?
Now, as thou hop'st to 'scape the Prophet's curse,
Release the royal Bajazet, and join,
With force united, to destroy the Christians.

Tam. 'Tis well.—I've found the cause that mov'd
thy zeal.

What shallow politician set thee on,
In hopes to fright me this way to compliance ?

Der. Our Prophet only——

Tam. No—thou dost belie him,
Thou maker of new faiths ! that dar'st to build
Thy fond inventions on religion's name.
Religion's lustre is, by native innocence:
Divinely pure, and simple from all arts :
You daub and dress her like a common mistress,
'The harlot of your fancies ; and by adding
False beauties, which she wants not, make the world
Suspect her angel's face is foul beneath,

And

And wo'not bear all lights. Hence! I have found thee.

Der. I have but one resort. Now aid me, Prophet!
Yet I have somewhat further to unfold; [*Aside.*]
Our Prophet speaks to thee in thunder—*thus—

[* *The Dervise draws a concealed dagger, and offers to stab Tamerlane.*

Tam. No, villain, Heav'n is watchful o'er its worshippers. [*Wresting the dagger from him.*

And blasts the murderer's purpose. Think, thou wretch!
Think on the pains that wait thy crime, and tremble
When I shall doom thee——

Der. 'Tis but death at last;
And I will suffer greatly for the cause
That urg'd me first to the bold deed.

Tam. Oh, impious!
Enthusiasm thus makes villains martyrs.
[*Pausing.*] It shall be so—To die! 'twere a reward—
Now learn the difference 'twixt thy faith and mine;
'Thine bids thee lift thy dagger to my throat;
Mine can forgive the wrong, and bid thee live.
Keep thy own wicked secret, and be safe;
If thou continu'st still to be the same,
'Tis punishment enough to be a villain.
If thou repent'st, I have gain'd one to virtue,
And am, in that, rewarded for my mercy;
Hence! from my sight—It shocks my soul to think
That there is such a monster in my kind. [*Exit Dervise.*
Whither will man's impiety extend?
Oh, gracious Heaven! dost thou withhold thy thunder,
When bold assassins take thy name upon 'em,
And swear they are the champions of thy cause?

Enter Monefes.

Mon. Oh, Emperor! before whose awful throne
Th' afflicted never kneel in vain for justice, { *Kneeling*
Undone, and ruin'd, blasted in my hopes, { *to Tam.*
Here let me fall before your sacred feet,
And groan out my misfortunes, till your pity,
(The last support and refuge that is left me)
Shall raise me from the ground, and bid me live.

Tam. Rise, Prince; nor let me reckon up thy worth,
And tell how boldly that might bid thee ask,
Lest I should make a merit of my justice,
The common debt I owe to thee, to all,

Ev'n to the meanest of mankind, the charter
By which I claim my crown, and Heav'n's protection.
Speak, then, as to a King, the sacred name
Where pow'r is lodg'd, for righteous ends alone.

Mon. One only joy, one blessing, my fond heart
Had fix'd its wishes on, and that is lost ;
That sister, for whose safety my sad soul
Endur'd a thousand fears——

Tam. I well remember,
When, ere the battle join'd, I saw thee first,
With grief uncommon to a brother's love,
Thou told'st a moving tale of her misfortunes,
Such as bespoke my pity. Is there ought
Thou canst demand from friendship ? Ask, and have it.

Mon. First, Oh ! let me intreat your royal goodness :
Forgive the folly of a lover's caution,
That forg'd a tale of falsehood to deceive you.
Said I, She was my sister ?—Oh ! 'tis false ;
She holds a dearer interest in my soul,
Such as the closest ties of blood ne'er knew ;
An interest, such as power, wealth, and honour,
Can't buy, but love, love only can bestow ;
She was the mistress of my vows, my bride,
By contract mine, and long ere this the priest
Had ty'd the knot for ever, had not *Bajazet*——

Tam. Ha ! *Bajazet* !—If yet if his pow'r withholds
The cause of all thy sorrows, all thy fears,
E'en gratitude for once shall gain upon him,
Spite of his savage temper to restore her.
This morn a soldier brought a captive beauty,
Sad tho' she seem'd, yet of a form most rare,
By much the noblest spoil of all the field ;
E'en Scipio, or a victor yet more cold,
Might have forgot his virtue at her sight.
Struck with a pleasing wonder, I beheld her,
Till by a slave that waited near her person,
I learn'd she was the captive Sultan's wife :
Strait I forbade my eyes the dangerous joy
Of gazing long, and sent her to her Lord.

Mon. There was *Monefes* lost. Too sure my heart
(From the first mention of her wondrous charms)
Presag'd it could be only my *Arpasia*.

Tam.

Tam. *Arpasia* ! did'st thou say ?

Mon. Yes, my *Arpasia*.

Tam. Sure I mistake, or fain I would mistake thee ;
I nam'd the Queen of *Bajazet* ; his wife.

Mon. His Queen ! his wife ! He brings that holy title
To varnish o'er the monstrous wrongs he has done me.

Tam. Alas ! I fear me, Prince, thy griefs are just ;
Thou art, indeed, unhappy ———

Mon. Can you pity me,
And not redress, *Oh, royal *Tamerlane* ! [**Kneeling*.
Thou succour of the wretched, reach thy mercy
To save me from the grave, and from oblivion ;
Be gracious to the hopes that wait my youth.
Oh ! let not sorrow blast me, lest I wither,
And fall in vile dishonour. Let thy justice
Restore me my *Arpasia* ; give her back,
Back to my wishes, to my transports give her,
To my fond, restless, bleeding, dying bosom.
Oh ! give her to me yet, while I have life
To bless thee for the bounty. Oh, *Arpasia* !

Tam. Unhappy, royal youth, why dost thou ask
What honour must deny ? Ha ! is she not
His wife, whom he has wedded, whom enjoy'd ?
And would'st thou have my partial friendship break
That holy knot which ty'd once, all mankind
Agree to hold sacred and undissolvable ?
The brutal violence would stain my justice,
And brand me with a tyrant's hated name
To late posterity.

Mon. Are then the vows,
The holy vows we register'd in Heav'n,
But common air ?

Tam. Could thy fond love forget
The violation of a first enjoyment ? ———
But sorrow has disturb'd and hurt thy mind.

Mon. Perhaps it has, and like an idle madman,
That wanders with a train of hooting boys,
I do a thousand things to shame my reason.
Then let me fly and bear my follies with me,
Far, far from the world's sight. Honour and fame,
Arms and the glorious war shall be forgotten ;
No noble sound of greatness, or ambition,
Shall wake my drowsy soul from her dead sleep,

'Till the last trump do summon.

Tam. Let thy virtue
Stand up and answer to these warring passions,
'That vex thy manly temper. From the moment
When first I saw thee, something wond'rous noble
Shone thro' thy form, and won my friendship for thee,
Without the tedious form of long acquaintance;
Nor will I lose thee poorly for a woman.
Come, droop no more, thou shalt with me pursue
True greatness, till we rise to immortality.
Thou shalt forget these lesser cares, *Monges*;
Thou shalt, and help me to reform the world.

Mon. So the good Genius warns his mortal charge
To fly the evil fate that still pursues him,
'Till it have wrought his ruin. Sacred *Tamerlane*,
Thy words are as the breath of angels to me.
But, oh! too deep the wounding grief is fix'd,
For any hand to heal.

Tam. This dull despair,
Is the soul's laziness: Rouse to the combat,
And thou art sure to conquer. War shall restore thee;
The sound of arms shall wake thy martial ardour,
And cure this amorous sickness of thy soul.
Begun by sloth, and nurs'd by too much ease;
The idle God of Love supinely dreams,
Amidst inglorious shades and purling streams.
In rosy fetters and fantastic chains,
He binds deluded maids and simple swains;
With soft enjoyments, woos them to forget
The hardy toils and labours of the great.
But if the warlike trumpet's loud alarms
To virtuous acts excite, and manly arms,
The coward boy avows his abject fear,
On silken wings sublime he cuts the air,
Scar'd at the noble noise and thunder of the war.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE, Bajazet's Tent.

Enter Haly and the Dervise.

Haly. **T**O 'scape with life from an attempt like this
Demands my wonder justly.

Der.

Der. True, it may ;
 But 'tis a principle of his new faith ;
 'Tis what his Christian favourites have inspir'd
 Who fondly make a merit of forgiveness,
 And give their foes a second opportunity,
 If the first blow should miss. Failing to serve
 The Sultan to my wish, and e'en despairing
 Of further means t' affect his liberty,
 A lucky accident retriev'd my hopes.

Ha. The Prophet and our master will reward
 Thy zeal in their behalf ; but speak thy purpose.

Der. Just ent'ring here I met the Tartar general,
 Fierce Omar.

Ha. He commands, if I mistake not,
 This quarter of the army, and our guards.

Der. The same. By his stern aspect, and the fires
 That kindled in his eyes, I guess'd the tumult
 Some wrong had rais'd in his tempestuous soul ;
 A friendship of old date had giv'n me privilege
 To ask of his concerns. In short, I learn'd,
 That burning for the Sultan's beauteous daughter,
 He had begg'd her as a captive of the war,
 From *Tamerlane* ; but meeting with denial
 Of what he thought his services might claim,
 Loudly he storms, and curses the Italian,
 As cause of this affront. I join'd his rage,
 And added to his injuries, the wrongs
 Our Prophet daily meets from this *Axalla*,
 But see, he comes. Improve what I shall tell,
 And all we wish is ours [*They seem to talk together aside.*]

Enter Omar.

Om. No——if I forgive it,
 Dishonour blast my name ! Was it for this
 That I directed his first steps to greatness,
 Taught him to climb, and made him what he is ;
 When our great Cam first bent his eyes towards him,
 (Then petty Prince of Parthia) and by me
 Persuaded, rais'd him to his daughter's bed,
 Call'd him his son, and successor of empire ;
 Was it for this, that like a rock I stood,
 And stemm'd the torrent of our Tartar Lords,
 Who scorn'd his upstart sway ? when Calibes,
 In bold rebellion, drew e'en half the provinces
 To own his cause, I, like his better angel,

G 4

Stood

Stood by his shaking throne, and fix'd it fast ;
And am I now so lost to his remembrance,
'That, when I ask a captive, he shall tell me,
She is *Axalla's* right, his Christian minion ?

Der. Allow me, valiant *Omar*, to demand,
Since injured thus, why right you not yourself ?
'The prize you ask is in your power.

Om. It is,
And I will seize it in despite of *Tamerlane*
And that Italian dog.

Ha. What need of force,
When every thing concurs to meet your wishes ?
Our mighty master would not wish a son
Nobler than *Omar*. From a father's hand
Receive that daughter, which ungrateful *Tamerlane*
Has to your worth denied.

Om. Now by my arms,
It will be great revenge. What will your Sultan
Give to the man that shall restore his liberty,
His crown, and give him pow'r to wreak his hatred
Upon his greatest foe ?

Ha. All he can ask,
And far beyond his wish—— [Trumpets.

Om. These trumpets speak
The Emperor's approach ; he comes once more
To offer terms of peace. Retire within.
I will no farther—he grows deadly to me ;
And curse me, Prophet, if I not repay
His hate, with retribution full as mortal. [Exeunt.

SCENE draws, discovers *Arpasia* lying on a couch.

TO thee, Oh, gentle sleep, alone
Is owing all our peace ;
By thee our joys are heighten'd shown ;
By thee our sorrows cease.
The nymph, whose hand, by fraud, or force,
Some tyrant has possess'd,
By thee obtaining a divorce,
In her own choice is bless'd.
Oh, stay ! *Arpasia* bids thee stay ;
The sadly weeping fair
Conjures thee, not to lose in day
The object of her care.

To

*To grasp whose pleasing form she sought,
That motion chas'd her sleep;
Thus by ourselves are oft'nest wrought
The griefs for which we weep.*

Arp. Oh death ! thou gentle end of human sorrows,
Still must my weary eye-lids vainly wake,
In tedious expectation of thy peace ?
Why stand thy thousand thousand doors still open,
To take the wretched in, if stern religion
Guards every passage, and forbids my entrance ?—
Lucrece could bleed, and Portia swallow fire,
When urg'd with griefs beyond a mortal sufferance ;
But here it must not be. Think then, *Arpasia*,
Think on the sacred dictates of thy faith,
And let that arm thy virtue, to perform
What Cato's daughter durst not—Live, *Arpasia*,
And dare to be unhappy.

Enter Tamerlane and Attendants.

Tam. When fortune smiles upon the soldier's arms,
And adds e'en beauty to adorn his conquest,
Yet she ordains, the fair should know no fears,
No sorrows to pollute their lovely eyes,
But should be us'd e'en nobly as herself,
The Queen and Goddess of the warrior's vows.
Such welcome as a camp can give, fair Sultaneſs,
We hope you have received ; it shall be larger,
And better as it may.

Arp. Since I have borne
That miserable mark of fatal greatness,
I have forgot all difference of conditions ;
Sceptres and fetters are grown equal to me,
And the best change my fate can bring his death.

Tam. When sorrow dwells in such an angel form,
Well may we guess that those above are mourners ;
Virtue is wrong'd, and bleeding innocence
Suffers some wond'rous violation here,
To make the saints look sad. Oh ! teach my power
To cure those ills which you unjustly suffer,
Lest Heav'n should wrest it from my idle hand,
If I look on, and see you weep in vain.

Arp. Not that my soul disdains the gen'rous aid
Thy royal goodness proffers ; but, Oh, Emperor !

It is not in my fate to be made happy;
 Nor will I listen to the coz'ner, hope,
 But stand resolv'd to bear the beating storm
 That roars around me; safe in this alone,
 That I am not immortal.—Tho' 'tis hard,
 'Tis wond'rous hard, when I remember thee
 (Dear native Greece!) and you, ye weeping maids,
 That were companions of my virgin youth!
 My noble parents! Oh, the grief of heart,
 The pangs, that, for unhappy me, bring down
 Their reverend ages to the grave with sorrow!
 And yet their is a woe surpassing all:
 Ye saints and angels give me of your constancy,
 If you expect I shall endure it long.

Tam. Why is my pity all that I can give
 To tears like yours? and yet I fear 'tis all;
 Nor dare I ask what mighty loss you mourn,
 Lest honour should forbid to give it back.

Arp. No, *Tamerlane*, nor did I mean thou should'st.
 But know (tho' to the weakness of my sex
 I yield these tears) my soul is more than man.
 Think, I am born a Greek, nor doubt my virtue;
 A Greek! from whose fam'd ancestors of old
 Rome drew the patterns of her boasted heroes.
 They must be mighty evils that can vanquish
 A Spartan courage, and a Christian faith.

Enter Bajazet.

Baj. To know no thought of rest! to have the mind
 Still ministering fresh plagues, as in a circle,
 Where one dishonour treads upon another;
 What knows the fiends beyond it?—Ha! by hell,

[*Seeing Arp. and Tam.*

There wanted only this to make me mad.
 Comes he to triumph here? to rob me love,
 And violate the last retreat of happiness?

Tam. But that I read upon thy frowning brow,
 That war yet lives and rages in thy breast;
 Once more (in pity to the suff'ring world).
 I meant to offer peace.——

Baj. And mean'st thou too
 To treat it with our Empress; and to barter
 The spoils which fortune gave thee for her favours?

Arp. What would the tyrant?

[*Aside.*
Baj.

Baj. Seek'st thou thus our friendship?
Is this the royal usage thou did'st boast?

Tam. The boiling passion that disturbs thy soul
Spreads clouds around, and makes thy purpose dark—
Unriddle what thy mystic fury aims at?

Baj. Is it a riddle? Read it there explain'd;
There, in my shame. Now judge me thou, Oh, Prophet,
And equal Heav'n, if this demand not rage!
The peasant-hind begot and born to slavery,
Yet dares assert a husband's sacred right,
And guard his homely couch from violation:
And shall a Monarch tamely bear the wrong
Without complaining?

Tam. If I could have wrong'd thee,
If conscious virtue, and all-judging Heav'n,
Stood not between, to bar ungovern'd appetite,
What hinder'd, but, in spite of thee, my captive,
I might have us'd a victor's boundless power,
And fated every wish my soul could form?
But to secure thy fears, know, *Bajazet*,
This is among the things I dare not do. [sent?

Baj. By hell, 'tis false! else wherefore art thou pre-
What cam'st thou for, but to undo my honour?
I found thee holding amorous parley with her,
Gazing and gloting on her wanton eyes,
And bargaining for pleasures yet to come:
My life, I know, is the devoted price——
But take it, I am weary of the pain.

Tam. Yet, ere thou rashly urge my rage too far,
I warn thee to take heed: I am a man,
And have the frailties common to man's nature;
The fiery seeds of wrath are in my temper,
And may be blown up to so fierce a blaze
As wisdom cannot rule. Know, thou hast touch'd me
E'en in the nicest, tend'rest part, my honour;
My honour! which, like pow'r, disdains being question'd;
Thy breath has blasted my fair virtue's fame,
And mark'd me for a villain and a tyrant.

Arp. And stand I here an idle looker-on,
To see my innocence murder'd and mangled
By barbarous hands, nor can revenge the wrong?
Art thou a man, and dar'st thou use me thus? [*To Baj.*
Hast thou not torn me from my native country,

From the dear arms of my lamenting friends,
 From my soul's peace, and from my injur'd love?
 Hast thou not ruin'd, blotted me for ever,
 And driv'n me to the brink of black despair?
 And is it in thy malice yet to add
 A wound more deep, to sully my white name,
 My virtue? ———

Baj. Yes, thou hast thy sex's virtues,
 Their affectation, pride, ill-nature, noise,
 Proneness to change, e'en from the joy that pleas'd 'em:
 So gracious is your idol, dear variety,
 That for another love you would forego
 An angel's form, to mingle with a devil's.
 Thro' ev'ry state and rank of men you wander,
 'Till e'en your large experience takes in all
 The different nations of the peopled earth. [tribe

Arp. Why sought'st thou not from thy own impious
 A wife like one of these? For such thy race
 (If human nature brings forth such) affords,
 Greece for chaste virgins fam'd, and pious matrons,
 'Teems not with monsters like your Turkish wives,
 Whom guardian eunuchs, haggard and deform'd,
 Whom walls and bars make honest by constraint.
 Know, I detest, like hell, the crime thou mention'st:
 Not that I fear or reverence thee, thou tyrant;
 But that my soul, conscious of whence it sprung,
 Sits unpolluted in its sacred temple,
 And scorns to mingle with a thought so mean.

Tam. Oh, pity! that a greatness so divine
 Should meet a fate so wretched, so unequal. ———
 Though blind and wilful to the good that courts thee,
 [To Bajazet.

With open-handed bounty Heav'n pursues thee,
 And bids thee (undeserving as thou art,
 And monstrous in thy crimes) be happy yet;
 Whilst thou, in fury, dost avert the blessing,
 And art an evil Genius to thyself.

Baj. No—Thou, thou art my greatest curse on earth!
 Thou, who hast robb'd me of my crown and glory,
 And now pursu'st me to the verge of life,
 To spoil me of my honour: Thou, thou hypocrite!
 That wear'st a pageant outside shew of virtue,

To

To cover the hot thoughts that glow within,
Thou rank adulterer !

Tam. Oh ! that thou wert
The lord of all those thousands, that lie breathless
On yonder field of blood : That I again
Might hunt thee in the face of death and danger,
Through the tumultuous battle, and there force thee,
Vanquish'd and sinking underneath my arm,
To own thou hast traduc'd me like a villain.

Baj. Ha ! does it gall thee, *Tartar* ? By revenge,
It joys me much, to find thou feel'st my fury.
Yes ! I will echo to thee. 'Thou adulterer !
Thou dost prophane the name of King and foldier,
And like a ruffian bravo cam'st with force
To violate the holy marriage-bed.

Tam. Wert thou not shelter'd by thy abject state,
The captive of my sword, by my just anger,
My breath, like thunder, should confound thy pride,
And doom thee dead, this instant, with a word. [not.

Baj. 'Tis false ! my fate's above thee, and thou dar'st

Tam. Ha ! dare not ? 'Thou hast rais'd my pond'rous
And now it falls to crush thee at a blow. [rage
A guard there.—* Seize and drag him to his fate.

[* Enter a guard, they seize Bajazet.

Tyrant, I'll do a double justice on thee,
At once revenge myself, and all mankind.

Baj. Well dost thou, ere thy violence and lust
Invade my bed, thus to begin with murder ;
Drown all thy fears in blood, and sin securely.

Tam. Away !——

Arp. [kneeling] Oh stay ! I charge thee, by renown ;
By that bright glory thy great soul pursues !
Call back the doom of death.

Tam. Fair injur'd excellence,
Why dost thou kneel and waste such precious pray'rs,
(As might ev'n bribe the saints to partial justice)
For one to goodness lost ! who first undid thee,
Who still pursues and aggravates the wrong.

Baj. By *Alba* ! no——I will not wear a life
Bought with such vile dishonour.—Death shall free me
At once from infamy, and thee, thou traitress !

Arp. No matter, tho' the whistling winds grow loud,
And the rude tempest roars, 'tis idle rage ;

Oh !

Oh ! mark it not. But let thy steady virtue
Be constant to its temper ; save his life,
And save *Arpasia* from the sport of talkers.
Think, how the busy, meddling world shall toss
Thy mighty name about, in scurril mirth ;
Shall brand thy vengeance as a foul design,
And make such monstrous legends of our lives,
As late posterity shall blush in reading.

Tam. Oh matchless virtue ! Yes, I will obey ;
Tho' laggard in the race admiring yet,
I will pursue the shining path thou tread'st.
Sultan, be safe, reason resumes her empire,
And I am cool again. — [*The Guards release Bajazet.*

Here break we off,
Lest farther speech should minister new rage.
Wisely from dangerous passions I retreat,
To keep a conquest which was hard to get :
And oh ! 'tis time I should for flight prepare,
A war more fatal seems to threaten there,
And all my rebel-blood assists the fair :
One moment more, and I too late shall find,
That love's the strongest pow'r that lords it o'er the
mind. [*Exit Tam. followed by the Guards.*

Baj. To what new shame, what plague am I reserv'd ?
Why did my stars refuse me to die warm ?
While yet my regal state stood unimpeach'd,
Nor knew the curse of having one above me ;
'Then too (altho' by force I grasp'd the joy)
My love was safe, nor felt the rack of doubt :
Why hast thou forc'd this nauseous life upon me ?
Is it to triumph o'er me ? but I will,
I will be free, I will forget thee all ;
The bitter and the sweet, the joy and pain,
Death shall expunge at once, and ease my soul.
Prophet, take notice, I disclaim thy paradise,
Thy fragrant bow'rs, and everlasting shades,
'Thou hast plac'd woman there, and all thy joys are
tainted. [*Exit Bajazet.*

Arp. A little longer yet, be strong, my heart,
A little longer let the busy spirits
Keep on their cheerful round. — It wo't be ;
Love, sorrow, and the sting of vile reproach,
Succeeding one another in their course,

Like

Like drops of eating water on the marble,
 At length have worn my boasted courage down :
 I will indulge the woman in my soul,
 And give a loose to tears and to impatience ;
 Death is at last my due, and I will have it. ———
 And see the poor *Monefes* comes to take
 One sad adieu, and then we part for ever.

Enter Monefes.

Mon. Already am I onward of my way :
 Thy tuneful voice comes like a hollow sound
 At distance to my ears. My eyes grow heavy,
 And all the glorious lights of Heav'n look dim ;
 'Tis the last office they shall ever do me,
 To view thee once, and then to close and die.

Arp. Alas ! How happy have we been, *Monefes* ?
 Ye gentle days that once were ours ; what joys
 Did every chearful morning bring along ?
 No fears, no jealousies, no angry parents,
 That for unequal births, or fortunes, frown'd ;
 But love, that kindly join'd our hearts, to bless us,
 Made us a blessing too to all besides.

Mon. Oh ! cast not thy remembrance back, *Arpasia*,
 'Tis grief unutterable, 'tis distraction !
 But let this last of hours be peaceful sorrow ;
 Here let me kneel, and pay my latest vows ;
 Be witness all ye saints, thou Heav'n and nature,
 Be witness of my truth, for you have known it ;
 Be witness, that I never knew a pleasure,
 In all the world could offer like *Arpasia* ;
 Be witness, that I liv'd but in *Arpasia* ;
 And oh ! be witness, that her loss has kill'd me.

Arp. While thou art speaking, life begins to fail,
 And every tender accent chills like death.
 Oh ! let me haste then yet, ere day declines,
 And the long night prevail, once more to tell thee
 What, and how dear *Monefes* has been to me.
 What has he not been ? — All the names of love.
 Brothers, or fathers, husbands, all are poor :
Monefes is myself, in my fond heart,
 Ev'n in my vital blood he lives and reigns ;
 The last dear object of my parting soul
 Will be *Monefes* ; the last breath that lingers
 Within my panting breast, shall sigh *Monefes*.

Mon.

Mon. It is enough ! Now to thy rest, my soul,
The world and thou have made an end at once.

Arp. Fain would I still detain thee, hold thee still :
Nor honour can forbid, that we together
Should share the poor few minutes that remain ;
I swear, methinks this sad society
Has somewhat pleasing in it.—Death's dark shades
Seem, as we journey on, to lose their horror :
At near approach the monsters form'd by fear
Are vanish'd all, and leave the prospect clear :
Amidst the gloomy vale, a pleasing scene
With flow'rs adorn'd, and never-fading green
Inviting stands to take the wretched in. }
No wars, no wrongs, no tyrants, no despair, }
Disturb the quiet of a place so fair, }
But injur'd lovers find *Elysium* there.

Enter Bajazet, Omar, Haly, and the Dervise.

Baj. Now by the glorious tomb that shrines our Pro-
By *Mecca's* sacred temple ! here I swear ! [phet,
Our daughter is thy bride ; and to that gift
Such wealth, such pow'r, such honours will I add,
That Monarchs shall with envy view thy state,
And own thou art a demigod to them.
Thou hast giv'n me what I wish'd, pow'r of revenge,
And when a King rewards, 'tis ample retribution.

Om. Twelve *Tartar* Lords, each potent in his tribe,
Have sworn to own my cause, and draw their thousands
'To-morrow, from th'ungrateful *Parthian's* side.
'The day declining seems to yield to night,
Ere little more than half her course be ended,
In an auspicious hour prepare for flight ;
The leaders of the troops thro' which we pass,
Rais'd by my pow'r, devoted to my service,
Shall make our passage secret, and secure.

Der. Already, mighty Sultan, art thou safe,
Since by yon passing torches' light, I guess
To his pavilion *Tamerlane* retires,
Attended by a train of waiting courtiers.
All, who remain within these tents, are thine,
And hail thee, as their Lord.
Ha, th' *Italian* Prince,
With sad *Monefes* are not yet gone forth.

Baj.

Baj. Ha ! with our Queen and daughter ?

Om. They are ours :

I mark'd the slaves who waited on *Axalla* ;
They, when the Emperor past out, prest on,
And mingled with the crowd, nor mis'd their Lord :
He is your pris'ner, Sir, I go this moment,
To seize, and bring him to receive his doom.

[*Exit Omar.*]

Baj. Haste, *Haly*, follow and secure the *Greek* ;
Him too I wish to keep within my pow'r. [*Exit Haly.*]

Der. If my dread Lord, permit his slave to speak,
I would advise to spare *Axalla's* life,
Till we are safe beyond the *Parthian's* pow'r :
Him, as our pledge of safety, may we hold ;
And, could you gain him to assist your flight,
It might import you much.

Baj. Thou counsell'st well ;
And tho' I hate him, for he is a Christian,
And to my mortal enemy devoted,
Yet to secure my liberty, and vengeance,
I wish he now were ours.

Der. And see ! they come !
Fortune repents, again she courts your side,
And, with this first fair offering of success,
She wooes you to forget her crime of yesterday.

Enter Omar, with Axalla prisoner, Selima following weeping.

Ax. I wo't not call thee villain, 'tis a name
Too holy for thy crime ; to break thy faith,
And turn a rebel to so good a master,
Is an ingratitude unmatch'd on earth ;
The first revolting angel's pride cou'd only
Do more than thou hast done. Thou copy'st well,
And keep'st the black original in view.

Om. Do, rage, and vainly call upon thy master,
To save his minion ; my revenge has caught thee,
And I will make thee curse that fond presumption,
That set thee on, to rival me in ought.

Baj. Christian, I hold thy fate at my disposal.
One only way remains to mercy open,
Be partner of my flight, and my revenge,
And thou art safe. Thy other choice is death.

Om. Wat means the Sultan ?

Der.

Der. I conjure you, hold——

Your rival is devoted to destruction, [*Aside to Omar.*
Nor would the Sultan now defer his fate
But for our common safety—Listen further. [*Whispers.*

Ax. Then briefly thus. Death is the choice I make;
Since, next to Heaven, my master and my friend
Has int'rest in my life, and still shall claim it.

Baj. Then take thy wish——Call in our mutes.

Sel. My father,

If yet you have not sworn to cast me off,
And turn me out, to wander in misfortune :
If yet my voice be gracious in your ears ;
If yet my duty and my love offend not,
Oh call your sentence back, and save *Axalla*.

Baj. Rise, *Selima* ; the slave deserves to die,
Who durst, with sullen pride, refuse my mercy :
Yet, for thy sake, once more I offer life.

Sel. Some angel whisper to my anxious soul
What I shall do to save him.——Oh ! *Axalla* !
Is it so easy to thee, to forsake me ?
Canst thou resolve, with all this cold indiff'rence,
Never to see me more ? To leave me here
The miserable mourner of my fate,
Condemn'd to waste my widow'd virgin youth,
My tedious days and nights in lonely weeping,
And never know the voice of comfort more ?

Ax. Search not too deep the sorrows of my breast ;
Thou say'st, I am indifferent, and cold.
Oh ! is it possible my eyes should tell
So little of the fighting storm within ?
Oh ! turn thee from me, save me from thy beauties,
Falshood and ruin all look lovely there ;
Oh ! let my lab'ring soul yet struggle thro'——
I will—I would resolve to die, and leave thee.

Baj. Then let him die—He trifles with my favour ;
I have too long attended his resolves.

Sel. Oh ! stay a minute, yet a minute longer ;

[*To Bajazet.*

A minute is a little space in life :
There is a kind consenting in his eyes ;
And I shall win him to your royal will.
Oh ! my *Axalla* ! seem but to consent——

[*To Axalla aside.*
Unkind

Unkind and cruel, will you then do nothing?
I find, I am not worth thy least of cares.

Ax. Oh! labour not to hang dishonour on me;
I could bear sickness, pain, and poverty,
Those mortal evils worse than death, for thee.
But this——It has the force of fate against us,
And cannot be.

Sel. See, see, Sir, he relents, [*To Bajazet.*
Already he inclines to own your cause:
A little longer, and he is all yours.

Baj. Then mark how far a father's fondness yields:
Till midnight I defer the death he merits,
And give him up till then to thy persuasion.
If by that time he meets my will, he lives;
If not, thyself shall own, he dies with justice.

Ax. 'Tis but to lengthen life upon the rack.
I am resolved already.

Sel. Oh! be still.
Nor rashly urge a ruin on us both;
'Tis but a moment more I have to save thee.
Be kind, auspicious *Alba*, to my pray'r;
More for my love, than for myself, I fear;
Neglect mankind awhile, and make him all your care. }

[*Exeunt Axalla and Selima.*

Baj. *Monefes!*——Is that dog secur'd?

Om. He is.

Baj. 'Tis well--my soul perceives returning greatness,
As nature feels the spring. Lightly she bounds,
And shakes dishonour, like a burden from her.
Once more imperial, awful, and herself.
So when of old, *Jove* from the *Titans* fled,
Ammons's rude front his radiant face bely'd,
And all the majesty of Heav'n lay hid. }
At length by fate to pow'r divine restor'd, }
His thunder taught the world to know its Lord, }
The god grew terrible again, and was again ador'd. }

A C T

A C T V,
S C E N E, Bajazet's Tent.

Enter Bajazet

Arp. SURE 'tis a horror more than darkness brings,
That sits upon the night : Fate is abroad.
Some ruling fiend hangs in the dusky air,
And scatters ruin, death, and wild distraction,
O'er all the wretched race of man below :
Not long ago, a troop of ghastly slaves
Rush'd in and forc'd *Monejes* from my sight ;
Death hung so heavy on his drooping spirits,
That scarcely could he say—*Farewel—for ever.*
And yet, methinks, some gentle spirit whispers,
Thy peace draws near, *Arpasia*, sigh no more.
And see the King of Terrors is at hand,
His minister appears.

Enter Bajazet and Haly.

Baj. [*Aside to Haly*] The rest I leave
To thy dispatch. For oh ! my faithful *Haly*,
Another care has taken up thy master ;
Spite of the high-wrought tempest in my soul,
Spite of the pangs, which jealousy has cost me ;
This haughty woman reigns within my breast :
In vain I strive to put her from my thoughts,
To drive her out with empire, and revenge :
Still she comes back like a retiring tide,
That ebbs awhile but strait returns again,
And swells above the beach.

Ha. Why wears my Lord

An anxious thought for what his pow'r commands ?
When in an happy hour, you shall ere long
Have borne the Empress, from amidst your foes,
She must be yours, be only, and all yours.

Baj. On that depends my fear. Yes, I must have her ;
I own, I will not, cannot go without her ;
But such is the condition of our flight,
That should she not consent, 'twould hazard all,
To bear her hence by force : Thus I resolve then ;
By threats and pray'rs, by every way to move her ;
If all prevail not, force is left at last ;
And I will set life, empire on the venture,
To keep her mine— Be near to wait my will.

[*Exit Haly.*
When

When last we parted 'twas on angry terms,
 Let the remembrance die, or kindly think
 That jealous rage is but a hasty flame,
 That blazes out, when love too fiercely burns.

Arp. For thee to wrong me, and for me to suffer,
 Is the hard lesson that my soul has learnt;
 And now I stand prepared for all to come:
 Nor is it worth my leisure to distinguish,
 If love or jealousy commit the violence;
 Each have alike been fatal to my peace,
 Confirming me a wretch, and thee a tyrant.

Baj. Still to deform thy gentle brow with frowns!
 And still to be perverse! It is a manner
 Abhorrent from the softness of thy sex:
 Women, like summer storms, awhile are cloudy,
 Burst out in thunder, and impetuous show'rs;
 But strait the sun of beauty dawns abroad,
 And all the fair horizon is serene.

Arp. Then to retrieve the honour of my sex,
 Here I disclaim that changing and inconstancy,
 To thee I will be ever, as I am.

Baj. Thou say'st, I am a tyrant; think so still,
 And let it warn thy prudence to lay hold
 On the good hour of peace, that courts thee now:
 Souls form'd like mine, brook being scorn'd but ill;
 Be well advis'd, and profit by my patience,
 It is a short-liv'd virtue.

Arp. Turn thy eyes
 Back on the story of my woes, Barbarian,
 Thou that hast violated all respects
 Due to my sex and honour of my birth,
 Thou brutal ravisher! that hast undone me,
 Ruin'd my love! Can I have peace with thee?
 Impossible! first Heav'n and Hell shall join,
 They only differ more.

Baj. I see, 'tis vain,
 To court thy stubborn temper with endearments.
 Resolve this moment, to return my love,
 And be the willing partner of my flight,
 Or by the Prophet's holy law! thou dy'st. [tom

Arp. And dost thou think to fright me with that fan-
 Death? 'Tis the greatest mercy thou canst give;
 So frequent are the murders of thy reign,

One

One day scarce passing by unmark'd with blood,
That children, by long use, have learn'd to scorn it :
Know, I disdain to aid thy treacherous purpose,
And shouldst thou dare to force me, with my cries
I will call Heav'n and earth to my assistance.

Baj. Confusion ! dost thou brave me ? But my wrath
Shall find a passage to thy swelling heart,
And rack thee worse, than all the pains of death.
'That *Grecian* dog, the minion of my wishes,
Shall be dragg'd forth, and butcher'd in thy fight ;
Thou shalt behold him, when his pangs are terrible,
Then, when he stares, and gasps, and struggles strongly,
Ev'n in the bitterest agony of dying ;
'Till thou shalt rend thy hair, tear out thy eyes,
And curse thy pride, while I applaud my vengeance.

Arp. Oh ! fatal image ! all my pow'rs give way,
And resolution sickens at the thought ;
A flood of passion rises in my breast,
And labours fiercely upward to my eyes.
Come all ye great examples of my sex,
Chaste virgins, tender wives, and pious matrons ;
Ye holy martyrs, who with wond'rous faith,
And constancy unshaken, have sustain'd
The rage of cruel men, and fiery persecution ;
Come to my aid, and teach me to defy
The malice of this fiend. I feel, I feel
Your sacred spirit arm me to resistance.
Yes, tyrant, I will stand this shock of fate ;
Will live to triumph o'er thee for a moment ;
Then die well pleas'd, and follow my *Moneses*.

Baj. Thou talk'st it well : But talking is thy privilege,
'Tis all the boasted courage of thy sex ;
Tho', for thy soul, thou dar'st not meet the danger.

Arp. By all my hopes of happiness ! I dare——
My soul is come within her ken of Heav'n ;
Charm'd with the joys and beauties of that place,
Her thoughts and all her cares she fixes there,
And 'tis in vain for thee to rage below :
Thus stars shine bright, and keep their place above,
Tho' ruffling winds deform this lower world.

Baj. This moment is the trial.

Arp. Let it come ;
This moment then shall shew I am a *Greek*,

And

And speak my country's courage in my suff'ring.

Baj. Here, mercy, I disclaim thee. Mark me, trait-
My love prepares a victim to thy pride, [trefs!
And when it greets the next, 'twill be in blood.

[*Exit Bajazet.*

Arp. My heart beats higher, and my nimble spirits
Ride swiftly thro' their purple channels round :
'Tis the last blaze of life : Nature revives
Like a dim winking lamp, that flashes brightly
With parting light, and strait is dark for ever.
And see my last of sorrows is at hand :

Death and *Monefes* come together to me ;
As if my stars, that had so long been cruel,
Grew kind at last, and gave me all I wish.

*Enter Monefes, guarded by some mutes ; others attending
with a cup of poison and a bow-string.*

Mon. I charge ye, O ye ministers of fate,
Be swift to execute your master's will,
Bear me to my *Arpasia* ; let me tell her,
The tyrant is grown kind. He bids me go,
And die beneath her feet. A joy shoots thro'
My drooping breast, as often when the trumpet
Has call'd my youthful ardor forth to battle ;
High in my hopes, and ravish'd with the sound,
I have rush'd eager on amidst the foremost,
To purchase victory, or glorious death.

Arp. If it be happiness, alas ! to die,
To lie forgotten in the silent grave,
To love and glory lost, and from among
The great creator's works expung'd and blotted,
Then very shortly shall we both be happy.

Mon. There is no room for doubt, 'tis certain bliss ;
The tyrant's cruel violence, thy loss,
Already seem more light, nor has my soul
One unrepented guilt upon remembrance,
To make me dread the justice of hereafter ;
But standing now on the last verge of life,
Boldly I view the vast abyss, eternity,
Eager to plunge, and leave my woes behind me.

Arp. By all the truth of our past lives I vow !
To die appears a very nothing to me :
But oh ! *Monefes*, should I not allow
Somewhat to love, and to my sex's tenderness !

This

This very now, I could put off my being,
Without a groan; but to behold thee die —
Nature shrinks in me, at the dreadful thought,
Nor can my constancy sustain this blow.

Mon. Since thou art arm'd for all things, after death,
Why should the pomp and preparation of it
Be frightful to thy eyes? There's not a pain,
Which age, or sickness brings, the least disorder,
That vexes any part of this fine frame,
Is full as grievous: All that the mind feels
Is much, much more. — And see, I go to prove it.
*Enter a mute; he signs to the rest, who proffer a bow-
string to Monefes.*

Arp. Think ere we part!

Mon. Of what?

Arp. Of something soft,
Tender, and kind, of something wond'rous sad.
Oh! my full soul!

Mon. My tongue is at a loss,
Thoughts crowd so fast, thy name is all I've left,
My kindest! truest! dearest! best *Arpasia!*

[The mutes struggle with him.]

Arp. I have a thousand, thousand things to utter,
A thousand more to hear yet. Barbarous villains!
Give me a minute. Speak to me, *Monefes.*

Mon. Speak to thee? 'Tis the business of my life,
'Tis all the use I have for vital air.
Stand'off, ye slaves! to tell thee that my heart
Is full of thee; that ev'n at this dread moment
My fond eyes gaze with joy and rapture on thee,
Angels and light itself are not so fair.

Enter Bajazet, Haly, and attendants.

Baj. Ha! wherefore lives this dog? Be quick, ye
And rid me of the pain. *[slaves,*

Mon. For only death,
And the last night can shut out my *Arpasia.*

[The mutes strangle Monefes.]

Arp. Oh! dismal! 'tis not to be borne. Ye moralists,
Ye talkers, what are all your precepts now?
Patience! Distraction! blast the tyrant, blast him!
Avenging lightnings; snatch him hence, ye fiends:
Love! Death! *Monefes!* Nature can no more,
Ruin is on her, and she sinks at once. *[She sinks down.]*

Baj.

Baj. Help, Haly, raise her up, and bear her out.

Ha. Alas! she faints.

Ar. No, tyrant, 'tis in vain;

Oh! I am now beyond thy cruel pow'r:

The peaceful slumber of the grave is on me:

Ev'n all the tedious day of life I've wander'd,

Bewilder'd with misfortunes;

At length 'tis night, and I have reach'd my home:

Forgetting all the toils and troubles past,

Weary I'll lay me down, and sleep till——Oh!

[*She dies.*]

Baj. Fly, ye slaves,

And fetch me cordials. No, she shall not die.

Spite of her sullen pride, I'll hold in life,

And force her to be blest against her will.

Ha. Already 'tis beyond the pow'r of art;

For see a deadly cold has froze the blood,

The pliant limbs grow stiff, and lose their use,

And all the animating fire is quenched;

Ev'n beauty too is dead; an ashy pale

Grows o'er the roses, the red lips have lost

Their fragrant hue, for want of that sweet breath,

That blest 'em with its odours as it pass.

Baj. Can it be possible? Can rage and grief,

Can love and indignation be so fierce,

So mortal in a woman's heart? Confusion!

Is she escap'd then? What is royalty?

If those that are my slaves, and should live for me,

Can die, and bid defiance to my pow'r.

Enter the Dervise.

Der. The valiant Omar sends, to tell thy greatness

The hour of flight is come, and urges haste;

Since he descries, near *Tamerlane's* pavilion,

Bright troops of crowding torches, who from thence

On either hand stretch far into the night,

And seem to form a shining front of battle.

Behold, ev'n from this place, thou may'st discern 'em.

[*Looking out.*]

Baj. By *Alba*! yes! they cast a day around 'em,

And the plain seems thick set with stars, as Heav'n.

Ha! or my eyes are false, they move this way,

'Tis certain so. Fly, *Haly*, to our daughter.

Vol. I.

H

[*Exit Haly*]

Let

Let some secure the Christian Prince *Axalla* :
We will be gone this minute.

Enter Omar.

Om. Lost ! Undone !

Baj. What mean'st thou ?

Om. All our hopes of flight are lost,
Mirvan and *Zama*, with the *Parthian* horse,
Inclose us round, they hold us in a toil.

Baj. Ha ! whence this unexpected curse of chance ?

Om. Too late I learnt, that early in the night
A slave was suffer'd by the Princess' order,
To pass the guard ; I clove the villain down,
Who yielded to his flight ; but that's poor vengeance.
That fugitive has rais'd the camp upon us,
And unperceiv'd by favor of the night,
In silence they have march'd to intercept us.

Baj. My daughter ! oh ! the traitress !

Der. Yet, we have

Axalla in our pow'r, and angry *Tamerlane*
Will buy his fav'rite's life, on any terms.

Om. With those few friends I have, I for a while
Can face their force ; if they refuse us peace,
Revenge shall sweeten ruin, and 'twill joy me,
To drag my foe down with me, in my fall. [*Exit Om.*

Enter HALY, with SELIMA weeping.

Baj. See where she comes ! with well dissembled Inno-
With truth, and faith so lovely in her face, [cence,
As if she durst ev'n disavow the falsehood.——
Hop'st thou to make amends with trifling tears,
For my lost crown, and disappointed vengeance ?
Ungrateful *Selima* ! thy father's curse !
Bring forth the minion of her foolish heart ;
He dies this moment.——

Ha. Would I could not speak
The crime of fatal love ; the slave who fled,
By whom we are undone, was that *Axalla*.

Baj. Ha ! sayst thou ?

Ha. Hid beneath that vile appearance,
The Princess found a means for his escape.

Sel. I am undone ! ev'n nature has disclaim'd me !
My father ! have I lost you all ? My father !

Baj. Talk'st thou of nature, who hast broke her bands !
Thou art my bane, thou witch, thou infant parricide !

But

But I will study to be strangely cruel,
 I will forget the folly of my fondness;
 Drive all the father from my breast, now snatch thee,
 Tear thee to pieces, drink thy treach'rous blood,
 And make thee answer all my great revenge:
 Now, now, thou traitress. [*Offers to kill her.*]

Sel. Plunge the ponyard deep! [*She embraces him.*]
 The life my father gave shall hear his summons,
 And issue at the wound — - Start not to feel
 My heart's warm blood gush out upon your hands,
 Since from your spring I drew the purple stream,
 And I must pay it back, if you demand it. [*weakness.*]

Baj. Hence! from my thoughts! thou soft relenting
 Hast thou not giv'n me up a prey? betray'd me?

Sel. Oh! not for worlds, not ev'n for all the joy,
 Love, or the Prophet's Paradise can give;
 Amidst the fears and sorrows of my soul,
 Amidst the thousand pains of anxious tenderness,
 I made the gentle, kind, *Axalla* swear,
 Your life, your crown, and honor should be safe.

Baj. Away! my soul disdains the vile dependance,
 No, let me rather die, die like a King:
 Shall I fall down at the proud *Tartar*'s foot,
 And say, Have mercy on me? Hark they come, [*Shout.*]
 Disgrace will overtake my ling'ring hand:
 Die then; thy father's shame, and thine, die with thee.
 [*Offers to kill her.*]

Sel. For Heav'n, for pity's sake!

Baj. No more, thou trifler!

[*She catches hold of his arm.*]

Ha! dar'st thou bar my will? Tear off her hold.

Sel. What, not for life? Shou'd not I plead for life?
 When nature teaches ev'n the brute creation
 To hold fast that, her best, her noblest gift.
 Look on my eyes, which you so oft have kiss'd,
 And swore they were your best-lov'd Queen's, my mo-
 Behold 'em now streaming for mercy, mercy! [*thrice.*]
 Look on me, and deny me, if you can!
 'Tis but for life I beg; is that a boon
 So hard for me to obtain? or you to grant?
 Oh! spare me! spare your *Selima*, my father.

Baj. A lazy sloth hangs on my resolution;
 It is my *Selima*! — Ha! What? my child?

And can I murder her?—Dreadful imagination?
 Again they come. I leave her to my foes! [*Shout.*
 And shall they triumph o'er the race of *Bajazet*!
 Die, *Selima*! Is that a father's voice?
 Rouse, rouse, my fury! yes, she dies the victim
 'To my lost hopes. Out! out, thou foolish nature!
 Justly she shares the ruin she has made.
 Seize her, ye * slaves, and strangle her this moment.

[*To the mutes.

Sel. Oh! let me die by you! Behold my breast!
 I wo't shrink! Oh save me but from these.

Baj. Dispatch.

[*The mutes seize her.*

Sel. But for a moment while I pray,
 That Heav'n may guard my royal father.

Baj. Dogs!

Sel. That you may only bless me, ere I die. [*Shout.*

Baj. Ye tedious villains! then the work is mine.

As Bajazet runs at Selima, with his sword. Enter Tamerlane, Axalla. &c. Axalla gets between Bajazet and Selima, whilst Tamerlane and the rest drive Bajazet and the mutes off the stage.

Ax. And am I come to save thee? Oh! my joy!
 Be this the whitest hour of all my life;
 This one success is more than all my wars,
 The noblest, dearest glory of my sword.

Sel. Alas, *Axalla*! Death has been around me,
 My coward soul still trembles at the fright,
 And seems but half secure, ev'n in thy arms.

Ax. Retire, my fair, and let me guard thee forth;
 Blood and tumultuous slaughter are about us,
 And danger in her ugliest form is here;
 Nor will the pleasure of my heart be full,
 'Till all my fears are ended in thy safety.

[*Exeunt Axalla and Selima.*

Enter Tamerlane, the Prince of Tanais, Zama, Mirvan, and Soldiers; with Bajazet, Omar, and the Dervise, prisoners.

Tam. Mercy at length gives up her peaceful scepter,
 And justice sternly takes her turn to govern;
 'Tis a rank world, and asks her keenest sword,
 To cut up villainy of monstrous growth.
Zama, take care, that with the earliest dawn,
 Those traitors meet the fate their treason merits.

[*Pointing to Omar and the Dervise.*

For

For thee, thou tyrant! [*To Baj.*] whose oppressive violence
 Has ruin'd those thou should'st protect at home,
 Whose wars, whose slaughters, whose assassinations,
 (That basest thirst of blood, that sin of cowards)
 Whose faith so often giv'n and always violated,
 Have been th'offence of Heav'n, and plague of earth,
 What punishment is equal to thy crimes?
 The doom, thy rage designed for me, be thine:
 Clos'd in a cage, like some destructive beast,
 I'll have thee borne about, in public view,
 A great example of the righteous vengeance
 That waits on cruelty, and pride like thine.

Baj. It is beneath me to decline my fate,
 I stand prepared to meet thy utmost hate:
 Yet think not, I will long thy triumph see;
 None want the means, when the soul dares be free.
 I'll curse thee with my last, my parting breath;
 And keep the courage of my life in death:
 Then boldly venture on that world unknown:
 It cannot use me worse than this has done.

[*Exit Bajazet guarded.*]

Tam. Behold the vain effects of earth-born pride,
 That scorn'd Heav'n's laws, and all its pow'r defied:
 That could the hand, which form'd it first, forget,
 And fondly say, I made myself be great:
 But justly those above assert their sway,
 And teach ev'n Kings what homage they should pay,
 Who then rule best, when mindful to obey.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

End of the fifth Act.

EPILOGUE.

TOO well we saw what must have been our fate,
 When harmony with beauty join'd of late,
 Threaten'd the ruin of our sinking state;
 Till you from whom our being we receive,
 In pity bid your own creation live.
 With moving sounds you kindly drew the fair,
 And fix'd once more, that shining circle here.

*The lyre you bring is half Appollo's praise ;
 Be ours the task to win and wear his bays.
 Thin houses were before so frequent to us,
 We wanted not a project to undo us.
 We seldom saw your honours but by chance,
 As some folks meet their friends of Spain and France.
 'Twas verse decay'd, or politics improv'd,
 That had estrang'd you thus from what you lov'd.
 Time was, when busy faces were a jest,
 When wit and pleasure were in most request ;
 When chearful theatres with crowds were grac'd ;
 But those good days of poetry are past :
 Now four reformers in an empty pit,
 With table-books, as at a lecture sit,
 To take notes, and give evidence 'gainst wit.
 Those who were once our friends, employ'd elsewhere,
 Are busy now in settling peace and war.
 With careful brows at Tom's and Will's they meet,
 And ask who did elections lose or get—
 Our friend has lost it—Faith I'm sorry for't,
 He's a good man, and ne'er was for the court :
 He to no government will sue for grace ;
 By want of merit safe against a place :
 By spite a patriot made, and sworn t' oppose
 All who are uppermost, as England's foes.
 Let Whig or Tory, any side prevail,
 Still 'tis his constant privilege to rail.
 Another, that the tax and war may cease,
 Talks of the Duke of Anjou's right, and peace ;
 And, from Spain's wise example, is for taking
 A Vice-Roy of the mighty Monarch's making ;
 Who should all rights and liberties maintain,
 And English laws by learn'd dragoons explain.*

*Come, leave these politics, and follow wit ;
 Here uncontroll'd you may in judgment sit :
 We'll never differ with a crowded pit.
 We'll take you all ev'n on your own conditions,
 Think you great men, and wond'rous politicians.
 And if you slight the offers which we make you,
 No Brentford Princes will for statesmen take you.*

7 MA 55

Act I.

FAIR PENITENT.

Scene I.



Dodd del.

Published July 25th 1776, by T. Lowndes & Partners.

Waller sculp.

MR. LAIKIN, in the Character of HORATIO.

Hold, let me take a moment's Thought.

THE
FAIR PENITENT.

A
TRAGEDY.

Quin morere, ut merita es, ferroque averte dolorem.

VIRG. *Æn.* Lib. 4.



To Her

Grace the Dutcheſs of ORMOND.

MADAM,

THE privilege of Poetry (or it may be the vanity of the Pretenders to it) has given them a kind of right to pretend at the ſame time, to the favour of thoſe, whom their high birth and excellent qualities have placed in a very diſtinguiſhing manner above the reſt of the world. If this be not a received maxim, yet I am ſure I am to wiſh it were, that I may have at leaſt ſome kind of excuſe for laying this Tragedy at your Grace's feet. I have too much reaſon to fear that it may prove but an indifferent entertainment to your Grace, ſince, if I have any way ſucceeded in it, it has been in deſcribing thoſe violent paſſions which have been always Strangers to ſo happy a temper, and ſo noble and ſo exalted a virtue as your Grace is miſtreſs of. Yet for all this, I cannot but confeſs the vanity which I have, to hope that there may be ſomething ſo moving in the miſfortunes and diſtreſs of the Play, as may be not altogether unworthy of your Grace's pity. This is one of the main deſigns of Tragedy, and to excite this generous pity in the greateſt minds, may paſs for ſome kind of ſucceſs in this way of writing. I am ſenſible of the preſumption I am guilty of by this hope, and how much it is that I pretend to in your Grace's approbation; if it be my good fortune to meet with any little ſhare of it, I ſhall always look upon it as much more to me than the general applauſe of the Theatre, or even the praiſe of a good critic. Your Grace's name is the beſt protection this Play can hope for, ſince the World, ill-natured as it is, agrees in an univerſal reſpect and defer-

ence for your Grace's person and character. In so censorious an age as this is, where malice furnishes out all the public conversations, where every body pulls and is pulled to pieces of course, and where there is hardly such a thing as being merry, but at another's expence; yet by a public and uncommon justice to the Dutches of *Ormond*, her name has never been mention'd, but as it ought, though she has beauty enough to provoke detraction from the fairest of her own sex, and virtue enough to make the loose and dissolute of the other (a very formidable party) her enemies. Instead of this, they agree to say nothing of her but what she deserves. That her spirit is worthy of her birth; her sweetness, of the love and respect of all the world; her piety, of her religion; her service, of her Royal Mistress; and her beauty and truth, of her Lord; that in short every part of her character is just, and that she is the best reward for one of the greatest heroes this age has produced. This, Madam, is what you must allow people every where to say; those whom you shall leave behind you in *England* will have something further to add, the loss we shall suffer by your Grace's journey to *Ireland*; the Queen's pleasure, and the impatient wishes of that nation, are about to deprive us of two of our public ornaments. But there is no arguing against reasons so prevalent as these. Those who shall lament your Grace's absence will yet acquiesce in the wisdom and justice of HER MAJESTY'S choice: Among all whose Royal favors none could be so agreeable, upon a thousand accounts, to that people, as the Duke of *Ormond*. With what joy, what acclamations shall they meet a Governor, who, beside their former obligations to his family, has so lately ventur'd his life and fortune for their preservation? What duty, what submission shall they not pay to that authority which the Queen has delegated to a person so dear to them? And with what honor, what respect shall they receive your Grace, when they look upon you as the noblest and best pattern HER MAJESTY could send them, of her own Royal goodness, and personal virtues? They shall behold your Grace with the same pleasure the *English* shall take whenever it shall be their good fortune to see you return again to your native country

country. In *England* your Grace is become a public concern, and as your going away will be attended with a general sorrow, so your return shall give as general a joy; and to none of those many, more than to,

MADAM,

Your GRACE's

most obedient, and

most humble Servant.

P R O L O G U E.

*L*ONG has the fate of Kings and Empires been
 The common bus'ness of the Tragic Scene,
 As if Misfortune made the Throne her seat,
 And none cou'd be unhappy but the great.
 Dearly, 'tis true, each buys the crown he wears,
 And many are the mighty Monarch's cares :
 By foreign foes and home-bred factions prest,
 Few are the joys he knows, and short his hours of rest.
 Stories like these with wonder we may hear ;
 But far remote, and in a higher sphere,
 We ne'er can pity what we ne'er can share :
 Like distant battles of the Pole and Swede,
 Which frugal Citizens o'er coffee read,
 Careless for who shall fail, or who succeed.
 Therefore an humbler theme our author chose,
 A melancholy tale of private woes :
 No Princes here lost Royalty bemoan,
 But you shall meet with sorrows like your own ;
 Here see imperious Love his vassals treat,
 As hardly as ambition does the great ;
 See how succeeding passions rage by turns,
 How fierce the youth with joy and rapture burns,
 And how to Death, for beauty lost, he mourns.

Let no nice taste the Poet's art arraign,
 If some frail vicious characters he feign :
 Who writes shou'd still let Nature be his care,
 Mix shades with lights, and not paint all things fair,
 But shew you men and women as they are.
 With deference to the fair he bade me say,
 Few to perfection ever found the way ;
 Many in many parts are known t' excel,
 But 'twere too hard for one to act all well ;
 Whom justly life would through each scene commend,
 The maid, the wife, the mistress, and the friend :
 This age 'tis true, has one great instance seen,
 And Heav'n in justice made that one a Queen.

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ

M E N.

Sciolto, a nobleman of Genoa, father to Calista, —
 Altamont, a young lord, in love with Calista, and de-
 signed her husband by Sciolto, — — — }
 Horatio, his friend, — — — — —
 Lothario, a young lord, an enemy to Altamont, — — —
 Rossano, his friend, — — — — —

At Drury Lane.
 Mr. AICKIN.
 Mr. BARRYMORE.
 Mr. BENSLEY.
 Mr. PALMER.
 Mr. WILLIAMS,
 Covent Garden.
 Mr. AICKIN.
 Mr. FARREN.
 Mr. HARLEY.
 Mr. HOLMAN.
 Mr. EGAN.

W O M E N.

Calista, daughter to Sciolto, — — —
 Lavinia, sister to Altamont and wife to Horatio, — — —
 Lucilla, confidant to Calista, — — —

Miss BRUNTON.
 Miss CHAPMAN.
 Miss STUART.

Servants to Sciolto.

SCENE, Sciolto's Palace and Garden, with some part of the street near it, in Genoa.

T H E
F A I R P E N I T E N T.

A C T I.

SCENE, *A garden belonging to Sciolto's Palace.*

Enter Altamont and Horatio.

Altamont. **L**ET this auspicious day be ever sacred,
No mourning, no misfortunes happen
on it:

Let it be mark'd for triumphs and rejoicings;
Let happy lovers ever make it holy,
Choose it to bless their hopes, and crown their wishes,
This happy day that gives me my *Calista*.

Horatio. Yes, *Altamont*; to-day thy better stars
Are join'd, to shed their kindest influence on thee:
Sciolto's noble hand that rais'd thee first,
Half dead and drooping o'er thy father's grave,
Compleats its bounty, and restores thy name
To that high rank and lustre which it boasted,
Before ungrateful *Genoa* had forgot
The merit of thy Godlike father's arms;
Before that country, which he long had serv'd
In watchful councils and in winter camps,
Had cast off his white age to want and wretchedness,
And made their court to faction by his ruin.

Alt. Oh great *Sciolto*! oh my more than father!
Let me not live, but at thy very name
My eager heart springs up, and leaps with joy.
When I forget the vast, vast debt I owe thee,
Forget! (but 'tis impossible) then let me
Forget the use and privilege of reason,
Be driven from the commerce of mankind,

To wander in the desert among brutes,
To bear the various fury of the seasons,
The night's unwholesome dew and noon-day's heat,
To be the scorn of earth, and curse of Heav'n!

Hor. So open, so unbounded was his goodness,
It reach'd ev'n me, because I was thy friend.
When that great man I lov'd, thy noble father
Bequeath'd thy gentle sister to my arms,
His last dear pledge and legacy of friendship,
That happy tie made me *Sciolto's* son;
He call'd us his, and with a parent's fondness
Indulg'd us in his wealth, bless'd us with plenty,
Heal'd all our cares, and sweeten'd love itself.

Alt. By Heav'n, he found my fortunes so abandon'd,
That nothing but a miracle could raise 'em;
My father's bounty, and the state's ingratitude,
Had stripp'd him bare, nor left him ev'n a grave;
Undone myself, and sinking with his ruin.
I had no wealth to bring, nothing to succour him,
But fruitless tears.

Hor. Yet what thou could'st thou didst,
And didst it like a son when his hard creditors,
Urg'd and assisted by *Lothario's* father,
(Foe to thy house, and rival of their greatness)
By sentence of the cruel law forbid
His venerable corps to rest in earth,
Thou gav'st thyself a ransom for his bones;
With piety uncommon, didst give up
Thy hopeful youth to slaves who ne'er knew mercy,
Sour, unrelenting money-loving villains,
Who laugh at human nature and forgiveness,
And are like fiends the factors of destruction.
Heav'n, who beheld the pious act, approv'd it,
And bade *Sciolto's* bounty be its proxy,
To bless thy filial virtue with abundance.

Alt. But see he comes, the author of my happiness,
The man who sav'd my life from deadly sorrow,
Who bids my days be blest with peace and plenty,
And satisfies my soul with love and beauty.

Enter Sciolto, he runs to Altamont and embraces him.

Sci. Joy to thee, *Altamont*! Joy to myself!
Joy to this happy morn, that makes thee mine,
That kindly grants what nature has denied me,

And

And makes me father of a son like thee.

Alt. My father! oh let me unlade my breast,
Pour out the fulness of my soul before you,
Shew ev'ry tender, ev'ry grateful thought,
This wond'rous goodness stirs. But 'tis impossible,
And utterance all is vile; since I can only
Swear you reign here, but never tell how much.

Sci. It is enough; I know thee, thou art honest;
Goodness innate, and worth hereditary
Are in thy mind; thy noble father's virtues
Spring freshly forth, and blossom in thy youth.

Alt. Thus Heav'n from nothing rais'd his fair crea-
And then with wond'rous joy beheld its beauty, [tion,
Well pleas'd to see the excellence he gave.

Sci. Oh noble youth! I swear since first I knew thee,
Ev'n from that day of sorrows when I saw thee,
Adorn'd and lovely in thy filial tears,
'The mourner and redeemer of thy father,
I set thee down and seal'd thee for my own:
Thou art my son, ev'n near me as *Calista*.

Horatio and *Lavinia* too are mine; [Embraces *Hor.*
All are my children, and shall share my heart;
But wherefore waste we thus this happy day?
'The laughing minutes summon thee to joy,
And with new pleasures court thee as they pass;
'Thy waiting bride ev'n chides thee for delaying,
And swears thou com'st not with a bridegroom's haste.

Alt. Oh! could I hope there was one thought of *Al-*
One kind remembrance in *Calista*'s breast, [tamont,
'The winds, with all their wings, would be too slow
To bear me to her feet. For Oh! my father,
Amidst the stream of joy that bears me on,
Blest as I am, and honor'd in your friendship,
There is one pain that hangs upon my heart.

Sci. What means my son?

Alt. When at your intercession,
Last night *Calista* yielded to my happiness,
Just ere we parted, as I seal'd my vows
With rapture on her lips, I found her cold,
As a dead lover's statue on his tomb;
A rising storm of passion shook her breast,
Her eyes a piteous show'r of tears let fall,
And then she sigh'd as if her heart were breaking.

With

With all the tend'rest eloquence of love
 I begg'd to be a sharer in her grief;
 But she with looks averse, and eyes that froze me,
 Sadly reply'd, her sorrows were her own,
 Nor in a father's power to dispose of.

Sci. Away! It is the cozenage of their sex,
 One of the common arts they practise on us:
 To sigh and weep, then when their hearts beat high,
 With expectation of the coming joy.
 Thou hast in camps and fighting fields been bred,
 Unknowing in the subtleties of women;
 The virgin bride, who swoons with deadly fear,
 To see the end of all her wishes near,
 When blushing from the light and public eyes,
 To the kind covert of the night she flies,
 With equal fires to meet the bridegroom moves,
 Melts in his arms, and with a loose she loves. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Lothario and Rossano.

Loth. The father and the husband!

Ross. Let them pass,
 They saw us not.

Loth. I care not if they did,
 Ere long I mean to meet 'em face to face,
 And gaul 'em with my triumph o'er *Calista*.

Ross. You lov'd her once.

Loth. I lik'd her, wou'd have married her,
 But that it pleas'd her father to refuse me,
 To make this honourable fool her husband.
 For which, if I forget him, may the shame
 I mean to brand his name with, stick on mine.

Ross. She, gentle soul, was kinder than her father.

Loth. She was, and oft in private gave me hearing,
 'Till by long list'ning to the soothing tale,
 At length her easy heart was wholly mine. [*lent,*]

Ross. I've heard you oft describe her, haughty, inso-
 And fierce with high disdain; it moves my wonder,
 That virtue thus defended, should be yielded
 A prey to loose desires.

Loth. Here then, I'll tell thee.
 Once in a lone and secret hour of night,
 When ev'ry eye was clos'd, and the pale moon
 And stars alone, shone conscious of the theft,

Hot

Hot with the *Tuscan* grape, and high in blood,
Hap'ly I stole unheeded to her chamber.

Ross. That minute sure was lucky.

Loth. Oh 'twas great!

I found the fond, believing, love-sick maid,
Loose, unattir'd, warm, tender, full of wishes:
Fierceness and pride, the guardians of her honor,
Were charm'd to rest, and love alone was waking.
Within her rising bosom all was calm,
As peaceful seas that know no storms, and only
Are gently lifted up and down by tides.
I snatch'd the glorious, golden opportunity,
And with prevailing, youthful ardor prest her,
Till with short sighs, and murmuring reluctance,
The yielding fair one gave me perfect happiness.
Ev'n all the live-long night we pass'd in bliss,
In ecstasies too fierce to last for ever;
At length the morn and cold indiff'rence came;
When fully fated with the luscious banquet,
I hastily took leave, and left the nymph
To think on what was past, and sigh alone.

Ross. You saw her soon again?

Loth. Too soon I saw her:

For oh! that meeting was not like the former;
I found my heart no more beat high with transport,
No more I sigh'd, and languish'd for enjoyment:
'Twas past, and reason took her turn to reign,
While ev'ry weakness fell before her throne.

Ross. What of the lady?

Loth. With uneasy fondness

She hung upon me, wept, and sigh'd and swore
She was undone; talk'd of a priest, and marriage;
Of flying with me from her father's pow'r;
Call'd ev'ry faint and blessed angel down,
To witness for her that she was my wife.
I started at that name.

Ross. What answer made you?

Loth. None; but pretending sudden pain and illness
Escap'd the persecution: two nights since,
By message urg'd, and frequent importunity,
Again I saw her. Strait with tears and sighs,
With swelling breasts, with swooning, with distraction,
With all the subtilties and pow'ful arts

Of wilful woman lab'ring for her purpose,
 Again she told the same dull nauseous tale.
 Unmoved, I begg'd her spare th' ungrateful subject,
 Since I resolv'd, that love and peace of mind
 Might flourish long inviolate betwixt us,
 Never to load it with the marriage-chain;
 That I would still retain her in my heart,
 My ever-gentle mistress and my friend;
 But for those other names of wife and husband,
 They only meant ill-nature, cares, and quarrels.

Ross. How bore she this reply?

Loth. Ev'n as the earth,
 When, (winds pent up, or eating fires beneath
 Shaking the mass) she labors with destruction.
 At first her rage was dumb, and wanted words,
 But when the storm found way, 'twas wild and loud.
 Mad as the priestesses of the *Delphic* god,
 Enthusiastic passion swell'd her breast,
 Enlarg'd her voice, and ruffled all her form;
 Proud, and disdainful of the love I proffer'd,
 She call'd me villain! monster! base betrayer!
 At last, in very bitterness of soul,
 With deadly imprecations on herself,
 She vow'd severely ne'er to see me more;
 Then bid me fly that minute: I obey'd,
 And bowing left her to grow cool at leisure.

Ross. She has relented since, else why this message,
 To meet the keeper of her secrets here
 This morning?

Loth. See the person whom you nam'd.

Enter Lucilla.

Well, my ambassadress, what must we treat of?
 Come you to menace war and proud defiance,
 Or does the peaceful olive grace your message?
 Is your fair mistress calmer? does she soften?
 And must we love again? Perhaps she means
 To treat in juncture with her new ally,
 And make her husband party to th' agreement.

Luc. Is this well done, my Lord? Have you put off
 All sense of human nature? keep a little,
 A little pity to distinguish manhood,
 Lest other men, tho' cruel, shou'd disclaim you,
 And judge you to be number'd with the brutes.

Loth.

Lotb. I see thou'lt learnt to rail.

Luc. I've learnt to weep ;
That lesson my sad mistress often gives me ;
By day she seeks some melancholy shade,
To hide her sorrows from the prying world ;
At night she watches all the long long hours,
And listens to the winds and beating rain,
With sighs as loud, and tears that fall as fast.
Then ever and anon she wrings her hands,
And cries, false ! false *Lothario* !

Lotb. Oh, no more !

I swear thou'lt spoil thy pretty face with crying,
And thou hast beauty that may make thy fortune ;
Some keeping cardinal shall dote upon thee,
And barter his Church treasure for thy freshness.

Luc. What ! shall I sell my innocence and youth,
For wealth or titles, to perfidious man !
To man ! who makes his mirth of our undoing ?
The base, profest betrayer of our sex !
Let me grow old in all misfortunes else,
Rather than know the sorrows of *Calista*.

Lotb. Does she send thee to chide in her behalf ?
I swear thou dost it with so good a grace,
That I could almost love thee for thy frowning.

Luc. Read there, my Lord, there, in her own sad
lines, [*Giving a letter.*
Which best can tell the story of her woes,
That grief of heart which your unkindness gives her.
[*Lothario reads*]

*Your cruelty—obedience to my father—give my hand
to Altamont.*

By Heav'n ! 'tis well ! such ever be the gifts,
With which I greet the man whom my soul hates.

[*Aside.*

But to go on !

~~—Wish—Heart—Honor—too faithless—
Weakness—to-morrow—last Trouble—lost Calista.~~

Women I see can change, as well as men ;
She writes me here, forsaken as I am,
That I should bind my brows with mournful willow,
For she has giv'n her hand to *Altamont* :
Yet tell the fair inconstant——

Luc. How, my Lord ?

Lotb.

Loth. Nay, no more angry words: say to *Calista*,
The humblest of her slaves shall wait her pleasure;
If she can leave her happy husband's arms,
To think upon so lost a thing as I am.

Luc. Alas! for pity come with gentler looks;
Wound not her heart with this unmanly triumph;
And tho' you love her not, yet swear you do,
So shall dissembling once be virtuous in you.

Loth. Ha! who comes here?

Luc. The bridegroom's friend, *Horatio*.
He must not see us here; to-morrow early
Be at the garden gate.

Loth. Bear to my love
My kindest thoughts, and swear I will not fail her.

[*Lothario putting up the letter hastily drops it
as he goes out.*

[*Exeunt Lothario and Rossano one way, Lu-
cilla another.*

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Sure 'tis the very error of my eyes:
Waking I dream, or I beheld *Lothario*;
He seem'd conferring with *Calista's* woman:
At my approach they started, and retir'd.
What business cou'd he have here, and with her?
I know he bears the noble *Altamont*
Profest and deadly hate——What paper's this?

[*Taking up the letter.*

Ha! To *Lothario*!—'sDeath! *Calista's* name.

[*Opening it.*

Confusion and Misfortune!

[*Reads.*

YOUR cruelty has at length determin'd me, and I have
resolv'd this morning to yield a perfect obedience to my
father, and to give my hand to *Altamont*, in spite of my
weakness for the false *Lothario*. I could almost wish I
had that heart, and that honor to bestow with it, which
you have robb'd me of.

Damnation! to the rest——

[*Reads again.*

But oh! I fear could I retrieve them, I should again be
undone by the too faithless, yet too lovely *Lothario*. This
is the last weakness of my pen, and to-morrow shall be the
last

last in which I will indulge my eyes. Lucilla shall conduct you, if you are kind enough to let me see you; it shall be the last trouble you shall meet with from

The lost Calista.

The lost indeed! for thou art gone as far
As there can be perdition. Fire and sulphur!
Hell is the sole avenger of such crimes.
Oh, that the ruin were but all thy own!
Thou wilt ev'n make thy father curse his age;
At sight of this black scowl, the gentle *Altamont*
(For oh! I know his heart is set upon thee)
Shall droop, and hang his discontented head,
Like merit scorn'd by insolent authority,
And never grace the public with his virtues.—
Perhaps ev'n now he gazes fondly on her,
And thinking soul and body both alike,
Blesses the perfect workmanship of Heav'n;
Then sighing, to his ev'ry care speaks peace,
And bids his heart be satisfied with happiness.
Oh, wretched husband! while she hangs about thee
With idle blandishments, and plays the fond one,
Ev'n then her hot imagination wanders,
Contriving riot, and loose 'scapes of love;
And while she clasps thee close makes thee a monster.
What if I give this paper to her father?
It follows that his justice dooms her dead,
And breaks his heart with sorrow; hard return,
For all the good his hand has heap'd on us:
Hold, let me take a moment's thought.

Enter Lavinia.

Lav. My Lord!

Trust me, it joys my heart that I have found you.
Enquiring wherefore you had left the company,
Before my brother's nuptial rites were ended,
They told me you had felt some sudden illness;
Where are you sick? Is it your head? your heart?
Tell me, my love, and ease my anxious thoughts,
That I may take you gently in my arms,
Sooth you to rest, and soften all your pains.

Hor. It were unjust: no, let me spare my friend,
Lock up the fatal secret in my breast,
Nor tell him that which will undo his quiet.

Lav.

Lav. What means my Lord?

Hor. Ha! saidst thou, my *Lavinia*?

Lav. Alas! you know not what you make me suffer?
Why are you pale? Why did you start and tremble?
Whence is that sigh? And wherefore are your eyes
Severely rais'd to Heav'n? The sick man thus,
Acknowledging the summons of his fate,
Lifts up his feeble hands and eyes for mercy,
And with confusion thinks upon his audit.

Hor. Oh no! thou hast mistook my sickness quite,
These pangs are of the soul. Wou'd I had met
Sharpest convulsions, spotted pestilences,
Or any other deadly foe to life,
Rather than leave beneath this load of thought.

Lav. Alas! what is it? wherefore turn you from me?
Why did you falsely call me your *Lavinia*,
And swear I was *Horatio's* better half,
Since now you mourn unkindly by yourself,
And rob me of my partnership of sadness?
Witness, you holy pow'rs, who know my truth,
There cannot be a chance in life so miserable,
Nothing so very hard but I could bear it,
Much rather than my love should treat me coldly,
And use me like a stranger to his heart.

Hor. Seek not to know what I would hide from all,
But most from thee. I never knew a pleasure,
Ought that was joyful, fortunate or good,
But strait I ran to bless thee with the tidings,
And laid up all my happiness with thee:
But wherefore, wherefore should I give thee pain?
Then spare me, I conjure thee; ask no farther;
Allow my melancholy thoughts this privilege,
And let 'em brood in secret o'er their sorrows.

Lav. It is enough; chide not, and all is well;
Forgive me if I saw you sad, *Horatio*,
And ask'd to weep out part of your misfortunes;
I wo't not press to know what you forbid me.
Yet, my lov'd Lord, yet you must grant me this,
Forget your cares for this one happy day,
Devote this day to mirth, and to your *Altamont*;
For his dear sake let peace be in your looks.
Ev'n now the jocund bridegroom wants your wishes,

He

He thinks the priest has but half blest his marriage,
'Till his friend hails him with the sound of joy.

Hor. Oh never! never! never! Thou art innocent:
Simplicity from ill, pure native truth,
And candor of the mind adorn thee ever;
But there are such, such false ones in the world,
'Twould fill thy gentle soul with wild amazement
To hear their story told.

Law. False ones, my Lord?

Hor. Fatally fair they are, and in their smiles,
The graces, little loves, and young desires inhabit;
But all that gaze upon 'em are undone;
For they are false, luxurious in their appetites,
And all the Heav'n they hope for is variety:
One lover to another still succeeds,
Another, and another after that,
And the last fool is welcome as the former:
'Till having lov'd his hour out, he gives place,
And mingles with the herd that went before him.

Law. Can there be such? And have they peace of
Have they in all the series of their changing [mind?
One happy hour? If women are such things,
How was I form'd so different from my sex!
My little heart is satisfied with you,
You take up all her room; as in a cottage
Which harbors some benighted princely stranger,
Where the good man, proud of his hospitality,
Yields all his homely dwelling to his guest,
And hardly keeps a corner for himself. [em,

Hor. Oh, were they all like thee men would adore
And all the bus'ness of their lives be loving;
The nuptial band shou'd be the pledge of peace,
And all domestic cares and quarrels cease;
The world should learn to love by virtuous rules,
And marriage be no more the jest of fools.

[*Exeunt.*

A C T II.

S C E N E, *A Hall.**Enter Calista and Lucilla.*

Calista. **B**E dumb for ever, silent as the grave,
 Nor let thy fond officious love disturb
 My solemn sadness, with the sound of joy.
 If thou wilt sooth me, tell some dismal tale
 Of pining discontent, and black despair;
 For oh! I've gone around through all my thoughts,
 But all are indignation, love or shame,
 And my dear peace of mind is lost for ever.

Luc. Why do you follow still that wand'ring fire,
 That has mis-led your weary steps, and leaves you
 Benighted in a wilderness of woe?
 That false *Lothario*! Turn from the deceiver;
 Turn, and behold where gentle *Altamont*,
 Kind as the softest virgin of our sex,
 And faithful as the simple village swain,
 That never knew the courtly vice of changing,
 Sighs at your feet, and wooes you to be happy.

Cal. Away, I think not of him. My sad soul
 Has form'd a dismal melancholy scene,
 Such a retreat as I would wish to find;
 An unfrequented vale, o'ergrown with trees
 Mossy and old, within whose lonesome shade,
 Ravens, and birds ill-omen'd, only dwell;
 No sound to break the silence, but a brook
 That bubbling, winds among the weeds: no mark
 Of any human shape that had been there,
 Unless a skeleton of some poor wretch,
 Who had long since, like me, by love undone,
 Sought that sad place out to despair and die in.

Luc. Alas for Pity!

Cal. There I fain would hide me,
 From the base world, from malice, and from shame;
 For 'tis the solemn counsel of my soul,
 Never to live with public loss of honor:
 'Tis fix'd to die, rather than bear the insolence
 Of each affected she that tells my story,
 And blesses her good stars that she is virtuous.

'To be a tale for fools ! scorn'd by the women,
And pity'd by the men ! Oh insupportable !

Luc. Can you perceive the manifest destruction,
The gaping gulf that opens just before you,
And yet rush on, tho' conscious of the danger ?
Oh, hear me, hear your ever-faithful creature ;
By all the good I wish, by all the ill
My trembling heart forebodes, let me intreat you,
Never to see this faithless man again :
Let me forbid his coming.

Cal. On thy life
I charge thee no ; my genius drives me on ;
I must, I will behold him once again ;
Perhaps it is the crisis of my fate,
And this one interview shall end my cares.
My lab'ring heart that swells with indignation,
Heaves to discharge the burden ; that once done,
The busy thing shall rest within its cell,
And never beat again.

Luc. Trust not to that :
Rage is the shortest passion of our souls ;
Like narrow brooks that rise with sudden show'rs,
It swells in haste, and falls again as soon ;
Still as it ebbs the softer thoughts flow in,
And the deceiver love supplies its place.

Cal. I have been wrong'd enough to arm my temper
Against the smooth delusion ; but alas !
(Chide not my weakness, gentle maid, but pity me)
A woman's softness hangs about me still :
Then let me blush, and tell thee all my folly.
I swear I could not see the dear betrayer
Kneel at my feet, and sigh to be forgiven,
But my relenting heart would pardon all,
And quite forget 'twas he that had undone me.

Luc. Ye sacred Powers, whose gracious providence
Is watchful for our good, guard me from men,
From their deceitful tongues, their vows and flatteries ;
Still let me pass neglected by their eyes,
Let my bloom wither, and my form decay,
That none may think it worth his while to ruin me,
And fatal love may never be my bane.

Cal. Ha ! *Altamont* ? *Calista*, now be wary,
And guard thy soul's accesses with dissembling ;

Ner

THE FAIR PENITENT.

171

Nor let this hostile husband's eyes explore
The warring passions, and tumultuous thoughts,
That rage within thee, and deform thy reason.

Enter Altamont.

Alt. Be gone my cares, I give you to the winds,
Far to be borne, far from the happy *Altamont*;
For from this sacred *era* of my love,
A better order of succeeding days
Come smiling forward, white and lucky all.

Calista is the mistress of the year,
She crowns the seasons with auspicious beauty,
And bids ev'n all my hours be good and joyful.

Cal. If I was ever mistress of such happiness,
Oh! wherefore did I play th' unthrifty fool,
And wasting all on others leave myself
Without one thought of joy to give me comfort?

Alt. Oh, mighty love! Shall that fair face profane
This thy great festival with frowns and sadness!
I swear it sha'not be, for I will woo thee
With sighs so moving, with so warm a transport,
That thou shalt catch the gentle flame from me,
And kindle into joy.

Cal. I tell thee, *Altamont*,
Such hearts as ours were never pair'd above,
Ill-suited to each other; join'd, not match'd!
Some sullen influence, a foe to both,
Has wrought this fatal marriage to undo us.
Mark but the frame and temper of our minds,
How very much we differ. Ev'n this day,
That fills thee with such ecstasy and transport,
To me brings nothing that should make me bless it,
Or think it better than the day before,
Or any other in the course of time,
That dully took its turn, and was forgotten.

Alt. If to behold thee as my pledge of happiness,
To know none fair, none excellent beside thee;
If still to love thee with unwearied constancy
Through ev'ry season, ev'ry change of life,
Through wrinkled age, through sickness and misfortune,
Be worth the least return of grateful love,
O then let my *Calista* bless this day,
And set it down for happy.

Cal. 'Tis the day
In which my father gave my hand to *Altamont* ;
As such I will remember it for ever.

Enter Sciolto, Horatio, and Lavinia.

Sci. Let mirth go on, let pleasure know no pause,
But fill up ev'ry minute of this day.

'Tis yours, my children, sacred to your loves ;
The glorious sun himself for you looks gay.

He shines for *Altamont* and for *Calista*.

Let there be music, let the master touch

The sprightly string, and softly breathing flute,

'Till harmony rouse ev'ry gentle passion,

Teach the cold maid to lose her fears in love,

And the fierce youth to languish at her feet.

Begin : ev'n age itself is chear'd with music,

It wakes a glad remembrance of our youth,

Calls back past joys, and warms us into transport.

[*Here an entertainment of music, and dancing.*]

S O N G.

I.

AH stay ! ah turn ! ah, whither would you fly,
Too charming, too relentless maid ?
I follow not to conquer, but to die ;
You of the fearful are afraid.

II.

In vain I call ; for she, like fleeting air,
When prest by some tempestuous wind,
Flies swifter from the voice of my despair,
Nor casts one pitying look behind.

Sci. Take care my gates be open, bid all welcome ;
All who rejoice with me to-day are friends :
Let each indulge his genius, each be glad,
Jocund and free, and swell the feast with mirth.
The sprightly bowl shall chearfully go round,
None shall be grave, nor too severely wise ;
Losses and disappointments, cares and poverty,
The rich man's insolence, and great man's scorn,
In wine shall be forgotten all. To-morrow
Will be too soon to think, and to be wretched.

Oh !

Oh! grant ye Powers, that I may see these happy,
 [Pointing to Altamont and Calista.
 Completely blest, and I have life enough;
 And leave the rest indifferently to fate. [Exeunt

Manet Horatio.

Hor. What if, while all are here intent on revelling,
 I privately went forth, and sought *Lothario*?
 This letter may be forg'd; perhaps the wantonness
 Of his vain youth, to stain a lady's fame;
 Perhaps his malice to disturb my friend.
 Oh no! my heart forebodes it must be true.
 Methought ev'n now I mark'd the starts of guilt,
 That shook her soul; tho' damn'd dissimulation
 Skreen'd her dark thoughts, and set to public view
 A specious face of innocence and beauty.
 Oh, false appearance! What is all our sov'reignty,
 Our boasted pow'r? when they oppose their arts,
 Still they prevail, and we are found their fools.
 With such smooth looks, and many a gentle word,
 The first fair she beguil'd her easy lord;
 Too blind with love and beauty to beware,
 He fell unthinking in the fatal snare;
 Nor could believe that such a heav'nly face
 Had bargain'd with the devil, to damn her wretched
 race. [Exit.

SCENE, *The Street near Sciolto's Palace.*

Enter Lothario and Rossano.

Loth. TO tell thee then the purport of my thoughts;
 The loss of this fond paper would not give
 A moment of disquiet, were it not [me
 My instrument of vengeance on this *Altamont*;
 Therefore I mean to wait some opportunity
 Of speaking with the maid we saw this morning.

Ross. I wish you, Sir, to think upon the danger
 Of being seen; to-day their friends are round 'em,
 And any eye, that lights by chance on you,
 Shall put your life and safety to the hazard

[*They confer aside.*

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Still I must doubt some mystery of mischief,
 I 3 Some

Some artifice beneath. *Lothario's* father
 I knew him well, he was sagacious, cunning,
 Fluent in words, and bold in peaceful councils,
 But of a cold, unactive hand in war;
 Yet with these coward's virtues he undid
 My unsuspecting, valiant, honest friend.
 'This son, if Fame mistakes not, is more hot,
 More open and unartful—Ha! he's here! [*Seeing him.*]

Loth. Damnation! he again!—This second time
 To day he has cross'd me like my evil genius.

Hor. I fought you, Sir.

Loth. 'Tis well then I am found. [*friend,*]

Hor. 'Tis well you are: The man who wrongs my
 To the earth's utmost verge I would pursue;
 No place, tho' e'er so holy, should protect him;
 No shape that artful fear e'er form'd should hide him,
 'Till he fair answer made, and did me justice.

Loth. Ha! dost thou know me? that I am *Lothario*?
 As great a name as this proud city boasts of.
 Who is this mighty man then, this *Horatio*?
 That I should basely hide me from his anger,
 Lest he should chide me for his friend's displeasure?

Hor. The brave, 'tis true, do never shun the light,
 Just are their thoughts, and open are their tempers,
 Freely without disguise they love and hate,
 Still are they found in the fair face of day,
 And Heav'n and men are judges of their actions.

Loth. Such let 'em be of mine; there's not a purpose
 Which my soul ever fram'd, or my hand acted,
 But I could well have bid the world look on,
 And what I once dar'd do, have dar'd to justify.

Hor. Where was this open boldness, this free spirit?
 When but this very morning I surpriz'd thee,
 In base, dishonest privacy, consulting
 And bribing a poor mercenary wretch,
 To sell her lady's secrets, stain her honour,
 And with a forg'd contrivance blast her virtue:
 At sight of me thou fled'st!

Loth. Ha! fled from thee?

Hor. Thou fled'st! and guilt was on thee, like a
 A pilferer descried in some dark corner, [*thief,*]
 Who there had lodg'd with mischievous intent
 To rob and ravage at the hour of rest,
 And do a midnight murder on the sleepers.

Loth.

Loth. Slave! Villain! [*Offers to draw, Rossano holds him.*]

Ross. Hold, my Lord! think where you are,
Think how unsafe and hurtful to your honor,
It were to urge a quarrel in this place,
And shock the peaceful city with a broil. [know]

Loth. Then since thou dost provoke my vengeance,
I would not for this city's wealth, for all
Which the sea wafts to our *Ligurian* shore,
But that the joys I reap'd with that fond wanton,
The wife of *Altamont*, should be as public
As is the noon-day sun, air, earth, or water,
Or any common benefit of nature :
'Think'st thou I meant the shame should be conceal'd ?
Oh no! by Hell and vengeance, all I wanted
Was some fit messenger to bear the news
To the dull doating husband; now I have found him,
And thou art he.

Hor. I hold thee base enough
To break through law, and spurn at sacred order,
And do a brutal injury like this;
Yet mark me well, young Lord, I think *Calista*
Too nice, too noble, and too great of soul,
To be the prey of such a thing as thou art.
'Twas base and poor, unworthy of a man,
To forge a scrawl so villainous and loose,
And mark it with a noble Lady's name;
These are the mean, dishonest arts of cowards,
Strangers to manhood, and to glorious dangers;
Who bred at home in idleness and riot,
Ransack for mistresses th' unwholesome stews,
And never know the worth of virtuous love. [still]

Loth. Think'st thou I forg'd the letter? Think so
'Till the broad shame come staring in thy face,
And boys shall hoot the cuckold as he passes.

Hor. Away! no woman could descend so low :
A skipping, dancing, worthless tribe you are,
Fit only for yourselves : You herd together;
And when the circling glass warms your vain hearts,
You talk of beauties that you never saw,
And fancy raptures that you never knew.
Legends of saints, who never yet had being,

Or being, ne'er were faints, are not so false
As the fond tales which you recount of love.

Loth. But that I do not hold it worth my leisure,
I could produce such damning proof——

Hor. 'Tis false :

You blast the fair with lies because they scorn you,
Hate you like age, like ugliness and impotence ;
Rather than make you blest, they would die virgins,
And stop the propagation of mankind.

Loth. It is the curse of fools to be secure,
And that be thine and *Altamont's* : Dream on,
Nor think upon my vengeance, 'till thou feel'st it.

Hor. Hold, Sir, another word, and then farewell ;
Tho' I think greatly of *Calista's* virtue,
And hold it far beyond thy pow'r to hurt ;
Yet as she shares the honor of my *Altamont*,
That treasure of a soldier, bought with blood,
And kept at life's expence, I must not have
(Mark me, young Sir) her very name profan'd.
Learn to restrain the licence of your speech ;
'Tis held you are too lavish : When you are met
Among your set of fools, talk of your dress,
Of dice, of whores, of horses, and yourselves ;
'Tis safer, and becomes your understandings.

Loth. What if we pass beyond this solemn order ?
And, in defiance of the stern *Horatio*,
Indulge our gayer thoughts, let laughter loose,
And use his sacred friendship for our mirth.

Hor. 'Tis well ! Sir, you are pleasant——

Loth. By the joys,
Which my soul has uncontroll'd pursu'd,
I would not turn aside from my least pleasure,
Tho' all thy force were arm'd to bar my ways ;
But like the birds, great nature's happy commoners,
That haunt in woods, in meads, and flow'ry gardens,
Rifle the sweets, and taste the choicest fruits,
Yet scorn to ask the lordly owner's leave.

Hor. What liberty has vain presumptuous youth,
That thou should'st dare provoke me unchastis'd ?
But henceforth, boy, I warn thee shun my walks ;
If in the bounds of yon forbidden place
Again thou'rt found, expect a punishment,
Such as great souls, impatient of an injury,

Exact from those who wrong 'em much, ev'n death;
Or something worse; an injur'd husband's vengeance
Shall print a thousand wounds, tear thy fine form,
And scatter thee to all the winds of Heav'n.

Loth. Is then my way in *Genoa* prescrib'd,
By a dependent on the wretched *Altamont*,
A talking Sir, that brawls for him in taverns,
And vouches for his valor's reputation?

Hor. Away, thy speech is fouler than thy manners.

Loth. Or if there be a name more vile, his parasite,
A beggar's parasite!

Hor. Now learn humanity.

[*Offers to strike him, Rossano interposes.*
Since brutes and boys are only taught with blows.

Loth. Damnation! [They draw.

Ross. Hold, this goes no further here.

Horatio, 'tis too much; already see,
The crowd are gath'ring to us.

Loth. Oh *Rossano*!

Or give me way, or thou'rt no more my friend.

Ross. *Sciolto*'s servants too have ta'en th' alarm;
You'll be oppress'd by numbers: be advis'd,
Or I must force you hence; take't on my word,
You shall have justice done you on *Horatio*.
Put up, my Lord.

Loth. This wo't brook delay;
West of the town a mile, among the rocks,
Two hours ere noon to-morrow I expect thee,
Thy single hand to mine.

Hor. I'll meet thee there.

Loth. To-morrow, oh my better stars! to-morrow
Exert your influence, shine strongly for me;
'Tis not a common conquest I would gain,
Since love, as well as arms, must grace my triumph.

[*Exeunt Lothario and Rossano.*

Hor. Two hours ere noon to-morrow! Ha! ere that
He sees *Calista*! Oh unthinking fool——
What if I urg'd her with the crime and danger?
If any spark from Heav'n remain unquenched
Within her breast, my breath perhaps may wake it;
Could I but prosper there, I would not doubt
My combat with that loud vain-glorious boaster.
Were you, ye fair, but cautious whom ye trust,

Did you but think how seldom fools are just,
 So many of your sex would not in vain,
 Of broken vows, and faithless men, complain.
 Of all the various wretches love has made,
 How few have been by men of sense betrayed?
 Convinc'd by reason, they your pow'r confess,
 Pleas'd to be happy, as you're pleas'd to bless.
 And conscious of your worth, can never love you less. }
 [Exit.]

A C T III.

SCENE, *An Apartment in Sciolto's Palace.*

Enter Sciolto and Calista.

Sci. **N**OW by my life, my honour, 'tis too much;
 Have I not mark'd thee wayward as thou
 Perverse and sullen all this day of joy? [art,
 When ev'ry heart was cheer'd, and mirth went round,
 Sorrow, displeasure, and repining anguish,
 Sat on thy brow; like some malignant planet,
 Foe to the harvest, and the healthy year,
 Who scouls adverse, and lours upon the world;
 When all the other stars, with gentle aspect,
 Propitious shine, and meaning good to man.

Cal. Is then the task of duty half perform'd?
 Has not your daughter giv'n herself to *Altamont*.
 Yielded the native freedom of her will,
 To an imperious husband's lordly rule,
 To gratify a father's stern command?

Sci. Dost thou complain?

Cal. For pity do not frown then,
 If in despite of all my vow'd obedience,
 A sigh breaks out, or a tear falls by chance;
 For oh! that sorrow which has drawn your anger,
 Is the sad native of *Calista's* breast,
 And once possess'd will never quit its dwelling,
 'Till life, the prop of all, shall leave the building,
 To tumble down, and moulder into ruin.

Sci. Now by the sacred dust of that dear saint,

That

That was thy mother, by her wond'rous goodness,
 Her soft, her tender, most complying sweetness,
 I swear some sullen thought that shuns the light,
 Lurks underneath that sadness in thy visage.
 But mark me well; tho' by yon Heav'n I love thee,
 As much, I think, as a fond parent can;
 Yet shouldst thou (which the pow'rs above forbid)
 E'er stain the honour of thy name with infamy,
 I cast thee off, as one whose impious hands
 Had rent asunder Nature's nearest ties,
 Which once divided never join again.
 To-day, I've made a noble youth thy husband,
 Consider well his worth, reward his love,
 Be willing to be happy, and thou art so.

[Exit Sciolto.]

Cal. How hard is the condition of our sex,
 Thro' ev'ry state of life the slaves of man?
 In all the dear delightful days of youth,
 A rigid father dictates to our wills,
 And deals out pleasure with a scanty hand:
 To his, the tyrant husband's reign succeeds;
 Proud with opinion of superior reason,
 He holds domestic bus'ness and devotion
 All we are capable to know, and shuts us,
 Like cloister'd idiots, from the world's acquaintance,
 And all the joys of freedom. Wherefore are we
 Born with high souls, but to assert ourselves,
 Shake off this vile obedience they exact,
 And claim an equal empire o'er the world?

Enter Horatio.

Hor. She's here! yet oh! my tongue is at a loss;
 Teach me, some pow'r, that happy art of speech,
 To dress my purpose up in gracious words;
 Such as may softly steal upon her soul,
 And never waken the tempestuous passions.
 By Heav'n she weeps!—Forgive me, fair *Calista*,
 If I presume on privilege of friendship,
 To join my grief to yours, and mourn the evils
 That hurt your peace, and quench those eyes in tears.

Cal. To steal unlooked for on my private sorrow,
 Speaks not the man of honour, nor the friend,
 But rather means the spy.

Hor. Unkindly said !

For oh ! as sure as you accuse me falsely,
I come to prove myself *Calista's* friend. [*Altamont.*

Cal. You are my husband's friend, the friend of

Hor. Are you not one ? Are you not join'd by Heav'n,
Each interwoven with the other's fate ?

Are you not mix'd like streams of meeting rivers,
Whose blended waters are no more distinguish'd,
But roll into the sea, one common flood ?

Then, who can give his friendship but to one ?

Who can be *Altamont's*, and not *Calista's* !

Cal. Force, and the wills of our imperious rulers,
May bind two bodies in one wretched chain ;
But minds will still look back to their own choice.

So the poor captive in a foreign realm,
Stands on the shore, and sends his wishes back
To the dear native land from whence he came.

Hor. When souls that should agree to will the same,
To have one common object for their wishes,
Look different ways, regardless of each other,
Think what a train of wretchedness ensues ;
Love shall be banish'd from the genial bed,
The night shall all be lonely and unquiet,
And ev'ry day shall be a day of cares.

Cal. Then all the boasted office of thy friendship,
Was but to tell *Calista* what a wretch she is :
Alas ! what needed that ?

Hor. Oh ! rather say,

I came to tell her how she might be happy ;

To sooth the secret anguish of her soul,
To comfort that fair mourner, that forlorn one,
And teach her steps to know the paths of peace.

Cal. Say thou, to whom this paradise is known,
Where lies the blissful region ? Mark my way to it,
For oh ! 'tis sure, I long to be at rest.

Hor. Then—to be good is to be happy :—Angels
Are happier than mankind, because they are better.
Guilt is the source of sorrow ; 'tis the fiend,
Th' avenging fiend, that follows us behind
With whips and stings ; the blest know none of this,
But rest in everlasting peace of mind,
And find the height of all their Heav'n is goodness.

Cal.

Cal. And what bold parasite's officious tongue
Shall dare to tax *Calista's* name with guilt?

Hor. None should; but 'tis a busy, talking world,
That with licentious breath blows like the wind,
As freely on the palace, as the cottage.

Cal. What mystic riddle lurks beneath thy words,
Which thou wouldst seem unwilling to express,
As if it meant dishonour to my virtue?
Away with this ambiguous shuffling phrase,
And let thy oracle be understood.

Hor. Lothario!

Cal. Ha! What wouldst thou mean by him?

Hor. Lothario and Calista!—Thus they join
Two names, which Heav'n decreed should never meet.
Hence have the talkers of this populous city,
A shameful tale to tell for public sport,
Of an unhappy beauty, a false fair one,
Who plighted to a noble youth her faith,
When she had giv'n her honour to a wretch.

Cal. Death! and confusion! have I liv'd to this?
Thus to be treated with unmanly insolence!
To be the sport of a loose ruffian's tongue!
Thus to be us'd! thus! like the vilest creature,
That ever was a slave to vice and infamy.

Hor. By honour and fair truth you wrong me much;
For, on my soul, nothing but strong necessity
Could urge my tongue to this ungrateful office:
I came with strong reluctance, as if death
Had stood a-cross my way, to save your honour,
Yours and *Sciolto's*, yours and *Altamont's*;
Like one who ventures through a burning pile,
To save his tender wife with all her brood
Of little fondlings, from the dreadful ruin.

Cal. Is this! is this the famous friend of *Altamont*,
For noble worth, and deeds of arms renown'd?
Is this! this tale-bearing, officious fellow,
That watches for intelligence from eyes;
This wretched *Argus* of a jealous husband,
That fills his easy ears with monstrous tales,
And makes him tofs, and rave, and wreak at length
Bloody revenge on his defenceless wife;
Who guiltless dies, because her fool ran mad?

Hor. Alas! this rage is vain; for if your fame,

Or

Or peace be worth your care, you must be calm,
And listen to the means are left to save 'em.

'Tis now the lucky minute of your fate.

By me your genius speaks, by me it warns you,

Never to see that curst *Lothario* more;

Unless you mean to be despis'd, be shunn'd

By all your virtuous maids and noble matrons;

Unless you have devoted this rare beauty

To infamy, diseases, prostitution——

Cal. Dishonour blast thee, base, unmanner'd slave!

That dar'st forget my birth, and sacred sex,

And shock me with the rude unhallow'd sound.

Hor. Here kneel, and in the awful face of Heav'n

Breathe out a solemn vow, never to see,

Nor think, if possible, on him that ruin'd thee;

Or by my *Altamont's* dear life I swear,

This paper!—Nay you must not fly!—This paper,

[*Holding her.*

This guilty paper shall divulge your shame——

Cal. What mean'st thou by that paper? What con-

hast thou been forging to deceive my father, [trivance

To turn his heart against his wretched daughter,

That *Altamont* and thou may share his wealth?

A wrong like this will make me ev'n forget

The weakness of my sex.—Oh for a sword,

To urge my vengeance on the villain's hand

That forg'd the scowl.

Hor. Behold, can this be forg'd?

See where *Calista's* Name——

[*Shewing the letter near.*

Cal. To atoms thus

[*Tearing it.*

Thus let me tear the vile, detested falshood,

The wicked, lying evidence of shame.

Hor. Confusion!

Cal. Henceforth, thou officious fool,

Meddle no more, nor dare ev'n on thy life

To breathe an accent that may touch my virtue,

I am myself the guardian of my honour,

And wo't not bear so insolent a monitor.

Enter Altamont.

Alt. Where is my life, my love, my charming bride,

Joy of my heart, and pleasure of my eyes,

The wish, and care, and bus'ness of my youth?

Oh!

Oh! let me find her, snatch her to my breast!
 And tell her she delays my bliss too long,
 'Till my soft soul ev'n sickens with desire.
 Disorder'd!—and in tears! *Horatio* too!
 My friend is in amaze!—What can it mean?
 Tell me, *Calista*, who has done thee wrong,
 That my swift sword may find out the offender,
 And do thee ample justice.

Cal. Turn to him.

Alt. *Horatio!*

Cal. To that insolent.

Alt. My friend!

Could he do this! He, who was half myself!
 One faith has ever bound us, and one reason
 Guided our wills: Have I not found him just,
 Honest as truth itself? And could he break
 The sanctity of friendship? Could he wound
 The heart of *Altamont* in his *Calista*?

Cal. I thought what justice I should find from thee?
 Go fawn upon him, listen to his tale,
 Applaud his malice, that would blast my fame,
 And treat me like a common prostitute.
 Thou art perhaps confed'rate in his mischief,
 And wilt believe the legend, if he tells it.

Alt. Oh impious! What presumptuous wretch shall
 To offer at an injury like that? [dare
 Priesthood, nor age, nor cowardise itself,
 Shall save him from the fury of my vengeance.

Cal. The man who dar'd to do it was *Horatio*!
 Thy darling friend! 'Twas *Altamont's* *Horatio*!
 But mark me well! while thy divided heart
 Dotes on a villain that has wrong'd me thus,
 No force shall drag me to thy hated bed;
 Nor can my cruel father's pow'r do more
 Than shut me in a cloister; there, well pleas'd,
 Religious hardships will I learn to bear,
 To fast, and freeze at midnight hours of pray'r;
 Nor think it hard, within a lonely cell,
 With melancholy, speechless saints to dwell;
 But bless the day I to that refuge ran,
 Free from the marriage chain, and from that tyrant,

man.

[*Exit Calista.*

Alt.

Alt. She's gone; and as she went, ten thousand fires
 Shot from her angry eyes, as if she meant
 Too well to keep the cruel vow she made.
 Now as thou art a man, *Horatio*, tell me,
 What means this wild confusion in thy looks?
 As if thou wert at variance with thyself.
 Madness and reason combating within thee,
 And thou wert doubtful which should get the better.

Hor. I would be dumb for ever, but thy fate
 Has otherwise decreed it; thou hast seen
 That idol of thy soul, that fair *Calista*,
 Thou hast beheld her tears.

Alt. I have seen her weep,
 I've seen that lovely one, that dear *Calista*,
 Complaining in the bitterness of sorrow, [her.
 That thou! my friend! *Horatio*! thou hadst wrong'd

Hor. That I have wrong'd her! Had her eyes been
 fed

From that rich stream which warms her heart, and
 For ev'ry falling tear a drop of blood, [number'd
 It had not been too much; for she has ruin'd thee,
 Ev'n thee, my *Altamont*! She has undone thee.

Alt. Dost thou join ruin with *Calista*'s name?
 What is so fair, so exquisitely good?
 Is she not more than painting can express,
 Or youthful poets fancy, when they love?
 Does she not come, like wisdom, or good fortune,
 Replete with blessings, giving wealth and honour?
 The dowry which she brings is peace and pleasure,
 And everlasting joys are in her arms.

Hor. It had been better thou hadst liv'd a beggar,
 And fed on scraps at great men's surly doors,
 Than to have match'd with one so false, so fatal.

Alt. It is too much for friendship to allow thee:
 Because I tamely bore the wrong thou didst her,
 Thou dost avow the barb'rous, brutal part,
 And urge the injury ev'n to my face.

Hor. I see she's got possession of thy heart,
 She's charm'd thee, like a fiend, to her bed,
 With looks of love, and with enchanting sounds;
 Too late the rocks and quick sands will appear:
 When thou art wreckt upon the faithless shore,
 Then vainly wish thou hadst not left thy friend,
 To follow her delusion.

Alt.

Alt. If thy friendship
Do churlishly deny my love a room,
It is not worth my keeping, I disclaim it.

Hor. Canst thou so soon forget what I've been to thee?
I shar'd the task of nature with thy father,
And form'd with care thy unexperienc'd youth
To virtue and to arms.

Thy noble father, oh thou light young man!
Would he have us'd me thus? One fortune fed us,
For his was ever mine, mine his, and both
Together flourish'd, and together fell.
He call'd me friend, like thee: would he have left me
Thus? for a woman? nay, a vile one too?

Alt. Thou canst not, dar'fst not mean it; speak again,
Say, who is vile? but dare not name *Casista*.

Hor. I had not spoke at first, unless compell'd,
And forc'd to clear myself; but since thus urg'd,
I must avow I do not know a viler.

Alt. Thou wert my father's friend, he lov'd thee well;
A kind of venerable mark of him
Hangs round thee, and protects thee from my vengeance:
I cannot, dare not lift my sword against thee,
But henceforth never let me see thee more.

[*Going out.*

Hor. I love thee still, ungrateful as thou art,
And must, and will preserve thee from dishonour,
Ev'n in despite of thee.

[*Holds him.*

Alt. Let go my arm.

Hor. If honour be thy care, if thou wouldst live,
Without the name of credulous, wittal husband,
Avoid thy bride, shun her detested bed,
The joys it yields are dash'd with poison——

Alt. Off!

To urge me but a minute more is fatal.

Hor. She is polluted! stain'd!

Alt. Madness and raging!

But hence!

Hor. Dishonour'd by the man you hate.

Alt. I pr'ythee loose me yet, for thy own sake,
If life be worth the keeping——

Hor. By *Lothario*.

Alt. Perdition take thee, villain, for the falshood.

[*Strikes him.*

Now nothing but thy life can make atonement.

Hor.

Hor. A blow! thou hast us'd me well—— [*Draws.*

Alt. This to thy heart.

Hor. Yet hold!——By Heav'n his father's in his face,
Spite of my wrongs my heart runs o'er with tenderness,
And I could rather die myself than hurt him.

Alt. Defend thyself, for by my much-wrong'd love,
I swear the poor evasion shall not save thee.

Hor. Yet hold! thou know'st I dare!—Think how
we've liv'd

[*They fight*; *Altamont presses on Horatio, who retires.*
Nay! then 'tis brutal violence! and thus,
Thus Nature bids me guard the life she gave.

[*They fight.*

Lavinia enters, and runs between their swords.

Lav. My brother! my *Horatio*! is it possible?

Oh! turn your cruel swords upon *Lavinia*.

If you must quench your impious rage in blood,

Behold my heart shall give you all her store,

To save those dearer streams that flow from yours. [this,

Alt. 'Tis well thou hast found a safe-guard; none but
No pow'r on earth could save thee from my fury.

Lav. Oh fatal, deadly sound!

Hor. Safety from thee!

Away, vain boy! Hast thou forgot the reverence

Due to my arm, thy first, thy great example,

Which pointed out the way to noble daring,

And shew'd thee what it was to be a man?

Lav. What busy, meddling fiend, what foe to goodness,
Could kindle such a discord? Oh! lay by

Those most ungentle looks, and angry weapons,

Unless you mean my griefs, and killing fears,

Should stretch me out at your relentless feet.

A wretched coarse, the victim of your fury. [itude;

Hor. Ask'st thou what made us foes? 'twas base ingra-

'Twas such a sin to friendship, as Heav'n's mercy,

That strives with man's untoward, monstrous wickedness,

Unweary'd with forgiving, scarce could pardon.

He, who was all to me, child! brother! friend!

With barb'rous bloody malice, fought my life.

Alt. Thou art my sister, and I would not make thee

The lonely mourner of a widow'd bed,

Therefore thy husband's life is safe; but warn him,

No more to know this hospitable roof.

He

He has but ill repaid *Scipio's* bounty ;
We must not meet ; 'tis dangerous ; farewell.

[*He is going, Lavinia holds him.*]

Lav. Stay *Altamont*, my brother stay, if ever
Nature, or what is nearer much than nature,
The kind consent of our agreeing minds,
Have made us dear to one another, stay,
And speak one gentle word to your *Horatio*.
Behold, his anger melts, he longs to love you,
To call you friend, then press you hard, with all
The tender, speechless joy of reconciliation.

Alt. It cannot, sha'not be !—you must not hold me.

Lav. Look kindly then !

Alt. Each minute that I stay,
Is a new injury to fair *Calista*.
From thy false friendship to her arms I'll fly ;
There, if in any pause of love I rest,
Breathless with bliss, upon her panting breast,
In broken melting accents I will swear,
Henceforth to trust my heart with none but her ;
Then own the joys, which on her charms attend,
Have more than paid me for my faithless friend.

[*Altamont breaks from Lavinia, and Exit.*]

Hor. Oh, raise thee, my *Lavinia*, from the earth ;
It is too much, this tide of flowing grief,
This wond'rous waste of tears, too much to give,
To an ungrateful friend, and cruel brother.

Lav. Is there not cause for weeping ? Oh *Horatio*.
A brother and a husband were my treasure,
'Twas all the little wealth that poor *Lavinia*
Sav'd from the shipwreck of her father's fortunes.
One half is lost already ; if thou leav'st me,
If thou shouldst prove unkind to me, as *Altamont*,
Whom shall I find to pity my distress,
To have compassion on a helpless wanderer,
And give her where to lay her wretched head ? [ings ?]

Hor. Why dost thou wound me with thy soft complain-
Tho' *Altamont* be false, and use me hardly,
Yet think not I impute his crimes to thee.
Talk not of being forsaken, for I'll keep thee,
Next to my heart, my certain pledge of happiness.
Heav'n form'd thee gentle, fair, and full of goodness,
And made thee all my portion here on earth ;

It gave thee to me, as a large amends,
For fortune, friends, and all the world beside.

Lav. Then you will love me still, cherish me ever,
And hide me from misfortune in your bosom :
Here end my cares, nor will I lose one thought,
How we shall live, or purchase food and raiment.
The holy Pow'r, who clothes the senseless earth,
With woods, with fruits, with flow'rs and verdant grass,
Whose bounteous hand feeds the whole brute creation,
Knows all our wants, and has enough to give us.

Hor. From *Genoa*, from falsehood and inconstancy,
To some more honest distant clime we'll go,
Nor will I be beholden to my country,
For ought but thee, the partner of my flight.

Lav. Yes, I will follow thee ; forsake, for thee,
My country, brother, friends, ev'n all I have ;
Tho' mine's a little all ; yet were it more,
And better far, it should be left for thee,
And all that I would keep should be *Horatio*.
So when the merchant sees his vessel lost,
Tho' richly freighted from a foreign coast,
Gladly, for life, the treasure he would give ;
And only wishes to escape, and live.
Gold and his gains no more employ his mind,
But driving o'er the billows with the wind,
Cleaves to one faithful plank, and leaves the rest behind. }

Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE, *a Garden.*

Enter Altamont.

Alt. WITH what unequal tempers are we form'd ?
One day the soul, supine with ease and ful-
Revels secure, and fondly tells herself, [ness,
The hour of evil can return no more ;
The next, the spirits pall'd, and sick of riot,
Turn all to discord, and we hate our beings,

Curse

Curse the past joy, and think it folly all,
 And bitterness, and anguish. Oh! last night!
 What has ungrateful beauty paid me back,
 For all that mafs of friendship which I squander'd?
 Coldness, aversion, tears, and sullen sorrow,
 Dash'd all my bliss, and damp'd my bridal bed.
 Soon as the morning dawn'd, she vanished from me,
 Relentless to the gentle call of love,
 I have lost a friend, and I have gain'd—a wife!
 Turn not to thought, my brain; but let me find
 Some unfrequented shade, there lay me down,
 And let forgetful dulness steal upon me,
 To soften and assuage this pain of thinking. [Exit.

Enter Lothario and Calista.

Loth. Weep not, my fair, but let the god of love
 Laugh in thy eyes, and revel in thy heart,
 Kindle again his torch, and hold it high,
 To light us to new joys; nor let a thought
 Of discord, or disquiet past, molest thee;
 But to a long oblivion give thy cares,
 And let us melt the present hour in bliss.

Cal. Seek not to sooth me with thy false endearments,
 To charm me with thy softness: 'tis in vain;
 Thou canst no more betray, nor I be ruin'd.
 The hours of folly, and of fond delight,
 Are wasted all and fled; those that remain
 Are doom'd to weeping, anguish, and repentance.
 I come to charge thee with a long account,
 Of all the sorrows I have known already,
 And all I have to come; thou hast undone me.

Loth. Unjust *Calista*! dost thou call it ruin,
 To love as we have done; to melt, to languish,
 To wish for somewhat exquisitely happy,
 And then be blest ev'n to that wish's height?
 To die with joy, and strait to live again,
 Speechless to gaze, and with tumultuous transport.—

Cal. Oh! let me hear no more, I cannot bear it.
 'Tis deadly to remembrance; let that night,
 That guilty night, be blotted from the year,
 Let not the voice of mirth, or music know it,
 Let it be dark and desolate, no stars
 Tog'litter o'er it; let it wish for light,
 Yet want it still, and vainly wait the dawn;

For

For 'twas the night that gave me up to shame,
To sorrow, to perfidious false *Lothario*.

Loth. Hear this, ye Pow'rs! mark how the fair deceiver
Sadly complains of violated truth;
She calls me false, ev'n she, the faithless she,
Whom day and night, whom Heav'n and earth have
Sighing to vow, and tenderly protest, [heard
Ten thousand times, she would be only mine,
And yet, behold, she has giv'n herself away,
Fled from my arms, and wedded to another,
Ev'n to the man whom most I hate on earth.

Cal. Art thou so base to upbraid me with a crime,
Which nothing but thy cruelty could cause?
If indignation, raging in my soul,
For thy unmanly insolence and scorn,
Urg'd me to do a deed of desperation,
And wound myself to be reveng'd on thee,
Think whom I should devote to death and hell,
Whom curse, as my undoer, but *Lothario*;
Hadst thou been just, not all *Sciolto's* pow'r,
Not all the vows and pray'rs of sighing *Altamont*,
Could have prevail'd, or won me to forsake thee.

Loth. How have I fail'd in justice, or in love?
Burns not my flame as brightly as at first?
Ev'n now my heart beats high, I languish for thee,
My transports are as fierce, as strong my wishes,
As if thou hadst never blest me with thy beauty.

Cal. How didst thou dare to think that I would live
A slave to base desires, and brutal pleasures,
To be a wretched wanton for thy leisure,
To toy, and waste an hour of idle time with?
My soul disdains thee for so mean a thought.

Loth. The driving storm of passion will have way,
And I must yield before it; wert thou calm,
Love, the poor criminal, whom thou hast doom'd,
Has yet a thousand tender things to plead,
To charm thy rage, and mitigate his fate.

Enter behind them Altamont.

Alt. I have lost my peace—Ha! do I live and wake!

Cal. Hadst thou been true, how happy had I been?
Not *Altamont*, but thou hadst been my lord.
But wherefore nam'd I happiness with thee?
It is for thee, for thee, that I am curst;

For

For thee, my secret soul each hour arraigns me,
 Calls me to answer for my virtue stain'd,
 My honour lost to thee; for thee it haunts me,
 With stern *Sciolto* vowing vengeance on me;
 With *Altamont* complaining for his wrongs——

Alt. Behold him here—— [Coming forward.

Cal. Ah! [Starting.

Alt. The wretch! whom thou hast made,
 Curses and sorrow's hast thou heap'd upon him,
 And vengeance is the only good is left. [Drawing.

Lotb. Thou hast ta'en me somewhat unawares, 'tis
 But love and war take turns like day and night, [true;
 And little preparation serves my turn,
 Equal to both, and arm'd for either field.

We've long been foes, this moment ends our quarrel;
 Earth, Heav'n, and fair *Calista* judge the combat.

Cal. Distraction! fury! sorrow! shame! and death!

Alt. Thou hast talk'd too much, thy breath is poison
 to me,

It taints the ambient air; this for my father,
 This for *Sciolto*, and this last for *Altamont*.

[They fight; Lothario is wounded once or twice,
 and then falls.

Oh, *Altamont*! thy genius is the stronger,
 Thou hast prevail'd!—My fierce, ambitious soul
 Declining droops, and all her fires grow pale;
 Yet let not this advantage swell thy pride,
 I conquer'd in my turn, in love I triumph'd:
 Those joys are lodg'd beyond the reach of fate;
 That sweet revenge comes smiling to my thoughts,
 Adorns my fall, and cheers my heart in dying. [dies.

Cal. And what remains for me, beset with shame,
 Encompass'd round with wretchedness? There is
 But this one way, to break the toil, and 'scape.

[She catches up Lothario's sword, and offers to kill
 herself; Altamont runs to her, and wrests it
 from her.

Alt. What means thy frantic rage?

Cal. Off! let me go.

Alt. Oh! thou hast more than murder'd me: yet still,
 Still art thou here! and my soul starts with horror,
 At thought of any danger that may reach thee.

Cal-

Cal. Think'st thou I mean to live? to be forgiv'n?
 Oh! thou hast known but little of *Calista*;
 If thou hadst never heard my shame, if only
 The midnight moon, and silent stars had seen it,
 I would not bear to be reproach'd by them,
 But dig down deep to find a grave beneath,
 And hide me from their beams.

Sci. (*within*) What ho! my son!

Alt. It is *Sciolto* calls; come near and find me;
 The wretched'st thing of all my kind on earth.

Cal. Is it the voice of thunder, or my father?
 Madness! confusion! let the storm come on,
 Let the tumultuous roar drive all upon me,
 Dash my devoted bark; ye surges, break it;
 'Tis for my ruin that the tempest rises.
 When I am lost, sunk to the bottom low,
 Peace shall return, and all be calm again.

Enter Sciolto.

Sci. Ev'n now *Rossano* leap'd the garden walls——
 Ha! death has been among you—Oh my fears!
 Last night thou hadst a difference with thy friend,
 The cause thou gav'st me for it was a damn'd one;
 Didst thou not wrong the man who told the truth?
 Answer me quick——

Alt. Oh! press me not to speak,
 Ev'n now my heart is breaking, and the mention
 Will lay me dead before you; see that body,
 And guess my shame! my ruin! Oh *Calista*!

Sci. It is enough! but I am slow to execute,
 And justice lingers in my lazy hand;
 Thus let me wipe dishonour from my name,
 And cut thee from the earth, thou stain to goodness—
 [*Offers to kill Calista, Altamont holds him.*]

Alt. Stay thee, *Sciolto*, thou rash father, stay,
 Or turn the point on me, and thro' my breast
 Cut out the bloody passage to *Calista*;
 So shall my love be perfect, while for her
 I die, for whom alone I wish'd to live.

Cal. No, *Altamont*! my heart, that scorn'd thy love,
 Shall never be indebted to thy pity;
 Thus torn, defac'd, and wretched as I seem,
 Still I have something of *Sciolto's* virtue.
 Yes! yes, my father, I applaud thy justice,

Strike

Strike home, and I will bleſs thee for the blow,
Be merciful, and free me from my pain,
'Tis ſharp, 'tis terrible, and I could curſe
The chearful day, men, earth, and heav'n, and thee,
Ev'n thee, thou venerable good old man,
For being author of a wretch like me.

Alt. Liſten not to the wildneſs of her raving.
Remember nature! Should thy daughter's murder
Defile that hand, ſo juſt, ſo great in arms,
Her blood would reſt upon thee to poſterity,
Pollute thy name, and ſully all thy wars.

Cal. Have I not wrong'd his gentle nature much?
And yet behold him pleading for my life.
Loſt as thou art to virtue, oh *Caliſta*!
I think thou canſt not bear to be outdone:
Then haſte to die, and be oblig'd no more.

Sci. Thy pious care has giv'n me time to think,
And ſav'd me from a crime; then reſt, my ſword;
To honour have I kept thee ever ſacred,
Nor will I ſtain thee with a raſh revenge:
But, mark me well, I will have juſtice done;
Hope not to bear away thy crimes unpuniſh'd,
I will ſee juſtice executed on thee,
Ev'n to a *Roman* ſtrictneſs; and thou, nature,
Or whatſoe'er thou art that plead'ſt within me,
Be ſtill, thy tender ſtrugglings are in vain.

Cal. Then am I doom'd to live, and bear your triumph?
To groan beneath your ſcorn and fierce upbraidings,
Daily to be reproach'd, and have my miſery
At morn, at noon, at night told over to me,
Leſt my remembrance might grow pitiful,
And grant a moment's interval of peace;
Is this, is this the mercy of a father?
I only beg to die, and he denies me.

Sci. Hence from my ſight, thy father cannot bear thee;
Fly with thy infamy to ſome dark cell,
Where on the confines of eternal night,
Mourning, miſfortune, cares and anguiſh dwell;
Where ugly ſhame hides her opprobrious head,
And death and hell deteſted rule maintain;
There howl out the remainder of thy life,
And wiſh thy name may be no more remember'd.

Cal. Yes, I will fly to ſome ſuch diſmal place,

And be more curst than you can wish I were;
 This fatal form, that drew on my undoing
 Fasting, and tears, and hardship shall destroy;
 Nor light, nor food, nor comfort will I know,
 Nor ought that may continue hated life.
 Then when you see me meagre, wan and chang'd,
 Stretched at my length, and dying in my cave,
 On that cold earth I mean shall be my grave,
 Perhaps you may relent, and sighing say,
 At length her tears have wash'd her stains away;
 At length 'tis time her punishment should cease;
 Die, thou poor suff'ring wretch, and be at peace.
 [Exit Calista.]

Sci. Who of my Servants wait there?

Enter two or three Servants.

On your lives

Take care my doors be guarded well, that none
 Pass out, or enter, but by my appointment.

[Exit Servants.]

Alt. There is a fatal fury in your visage,
 It blazes fierce, and menaces destruction:
 My father, I am sick of many sorrows,
 Ev'n now my easy heart is breaking with 'em,
 Yet, above all, one fear distracts me most,
 I tremble at the vengeance you meditate,
 On the poor, faithless, lovely, dear *Calista*.

Sci. Hast thou not read what brave *Virginus* did?
 With his own hand he slew his only daughter,
 To save her from the fierce *Decem-vir's* lust.
 He slew her yet unspotted, to prevent
 The shame which she might know. Then what should I
 do?

But thou hast ty'd my hand.—I wo'not kill her
 Yet by the ruin she has brought upon us,
 The common infamy that brands us both,
 She sha'not 'scape.

Alt. You mean that she shall die then?

Sci. Ask me not what, nor how I have resolv'd,
 For all within is anarchy and uproar.
 Oh *Altamont*! what a vast scheme of joy
 Has this one day destroy'd! Well did I hope
 This daughter would have blest my latter days,
 That I should live to see you the world's wonder;

So

So happy, great, and good, that none were like you.
 While I, from busy life and care set free,
 Had spent the evening of my age at home,
 Among a little prattling race of yours :
 There, like an old man talk'd a while, and then
 Laid down and slept in peace. Instead of this,
 Sorrow and shame must bring me to my grave ;
 Oh damn her ! damn her !

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Arm yourself, my Lord ;
Rossano, who but now escap'd the garden,
 Has gather'd in the street a band of rioters,
 Who threaten you, and all your friends, with ruin,
 Unless *Lothario* be returned in safety.

Sci. By Heav'n, their fury rises to my wish,
 Nor shall misfortune know my house alone,
 But thou, *Lothario*, and thy race, shall pay me,
 For all the sorrows which my age is curst with.
 I think my name as great, my friends as potent,
 As any in the state ; all shall be summon'd :
 I know that all will join their hands to ours,
 And vindicate thy vengeance. Raise the body,
 And bear it in ; his friends shall buy him dearly,
 I will have blood for ransom : When our force
 Is full, and arm'd, we shall expect thy sword,
 To join with us, and sacrifice to justice. [Exit.

[The body of Lothario is carried off by Servants.]

Alt. There is a stupid weight upon my senses,
 A dismal sullen stillness, that succeeds
 The storm of rage and grief, like silent death,
 After the tumult and the noise of life.
 Would it were death, as sure 'tis wond'rous like it,
 For I am sick of living, my soul's pall'd,
 She kindles not with anger or revenge ;
 Love was th' informing, active fire within,
 Now that is quench'd, the mass forgets to move,
 And longs to mingle with its kindred earth.

*A tumultuous noise with clashing of swords as
 at a little distance.*

Enter Lavinia with two Servants, their swords drawn.

Law. Fly, swiftly fly, to my *Horatio's* aid,
 Nor lose your vain officious cares on me ;
 Bring me my Lord, my husband to my arms ;

He is *Lavinia's* life, bring him me safe,
And I shall be at ease, be well and happy.

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

Alt. Art thou *Lavinia*? Oh! what barb'rous hand
Could wrong thy poor, defenceless innocence,
And leave such marks of more than savage fury?

Lav. My brother! O my heart is full of fears;
Perhaps ev'n now my dear *Horatio* bleeds.
Not far from hence, as passing to the port,
By a mad multitude we were surrounded,
Who ran upon us with uplifted swords,
And cried aloud for vengeance, and *Lothario*.
My Lord, with ready boldness, stood the shock,
To shelter me from danger, but in vain,
Had not a party from *Sciolto's* palace,
Rush'd out, and snatch'd me from amidst the fray.

Alt. What of my friend?

Lav. Ha! by my joys 'tis he, [Looking out.
He lives, he comes to bless me, he is safe!—
Enter Horatio, with two or three Servants, their swords
drawn.

1 Serv. 'Twere at the utmost hazard of your life
To venture forth again, 'till we are stronger;
Their number trebles ours.

Hor. No matter, let it;
Death is not half so shocking as that traitor.
My honest soul is mad with indignation,
To think her plainness could be so abus'd,
As to mistake that wretch, and call him friend;
I cannot bear the sight.

Alt. Open thou earth,
Gape wide, and take me down to thy dark bosom,
To hide me from *Horatio*.

Hor. Oh *Lavinia*!
Believe not but I joy to see thee safe:
Would our ill fortune had not drove us hither;
I could ev'n wish, we rather had been wreckt
On any other shore, than sav'd on this.

Lav. Oh, let us bless the mercy that preserv'd us,
That gracious pow'r that sav'd us for each other:
And, to adorn the sacrifice of praise,
Offer forgiveness too; be thou like Heav'n,
And put away th' offences of thy friend,
Far, far from thy remembrance.

Alt.

Alt. I have mark'd him,

To see if one forgiving glance stole hither,
If any spark of friendship were alive,
That would, by sympathy, at meeting glow,
And strive to kindle up the flame anew;
'Tis lost, 'tis gone, his soul is quite estrang'd,
And knows me for its counterpart no more.

Hor. Thou know'st thy rule, thy empire in *Horatio*,
Nor canst thou ask in vain, command in vain,
Where nature, reason, nay, where love is judge;
But when you urge my temper, to comply
With what it most abhors, I cannot do it.

Lav. Where didst thou get this sullen gloomy hate?
It was not in thy nature to be thus;
Come put it off, and let thy heart be chearful,
Be gay again, and know the joys of friendship,
The trust, security, and mutual tenderness,
The double joys, where each is glad for both;
Friendship, the wealth, the last retreat and strength,
Secure against ill fortune, and the world.

Hor. I am not apt to take a light offence,
But patient of the failings of my friends,
And willing to forgive; but when an injury
Stabs to the heart, and rouses my resentment,
(Perhaps it is the fault of my rude nature)
I own I cannot easily forgive it.

Alt. Thou hast forgot me.

Hor. No.

Alt. Why are thy eyes
Impatient of me then, scornful and fierce?

Hor. Because they speak the meaning of my heart,
Because they are honest, and disdain a villain.

Alt. I have wrong'd thee much, *Horatio*.

Hor. True, thou hast.

When I forget it, may I be a wretch,
Vile as thyself, a false perfidious fellow,
An infamous, believing, *British* husband. [aveng'd it.

Alt. I've wrong'd thee much, and Heav'n has well:
I have not, since we parted, been at peace,
Nor known one joy sincere; our broken friendship
Pursu'd me to the last retreat of love, [horror.
Stood glaring like a ghost, and made me cold with
Misfortunes on misfortunes press upon me,

Swell o'er my head, like waves, and dash me down.
Sorrow, remorse, and shame, have torn my soul,
They hang like winter on my youthful hopes,
And blast the spring and promise of my year.

Lav. So flow'rs are gather'd to adorn a grave,
To lose their freshness amongst bones and rottenness,
And have their odors stifled in the dust.
Canst thou hear this, thou cruel, hard *Horatio*?
Canst thou behold thy *Altamont* undone?
That gentle, that dear youth? canst thou behold him,
His poor heart broken, death in his pale visage,
And groaning out his woes, yet stand unmov'd?

Hor. The brave and wise I pity in misfortune,
But when ingratitude and folly suffers,
'Tis weakness to be touch'd.

Alt. I wo't not ask thee
To pity or forgive me; but confess,
This scorn, this insolence of hate is just;
'Tis constancy of mind, and manly in thee.
But oh! had I been wrong'd by thee, *Horatio*,
There is a yielding softness in my heart
Could ne'er have stood it out, but I had ran,
With streaming eyes and open arms, upon thee,
And prest thee close, close!

Hor. I must hear no more,
The weakness is contagious, I shall catch it,
And be a tame fond wretch.

Lav. Where wouldst thou go?
Wouldst thou part thus? You sha'not, 'tis impossible;
For I will bar thy passage, kneeling thus:
Perhaps thy cruel hand may spurn me off,
But I will throw my body in thy way,
And thou shalt trample o'er my faithful bosom,
Tread on me, wound me, kill me, ere thou pass.

Alt. Urge not in vain thy pious suit, *Lavinia*,
I have enough to rid me of my pain.

Calista, thou hadst reach'd my heart before;
To make all sure, my friend repeats the blow:
But in the grave our cares shall be forgotten,
There love and friendship cease.

[Falls.

[*Lavinia runs to him, and endeavours to raise him.*

Lav. Speak to me, *Altamont*.

He faints! he dies! Now turn and see thy triumph.

My

My brother! But our cares shall end together;
Here will I lay me down by thy dear side,
Bemoan thy too hard fate, then share it with thee,
And never see my cruel lord again.

[*Horatio runs to Altamont, and raises him in his arms.*

Hor. It is too much to bear! Look up, my *Altamont*!
My stubborn, unrelenting heart has kill'd him.
Look up and bless me, tell me that thou liv'st.
Oh! I have urg'd thy gentleness too far; [*He revives.*
Do thou and my *Lavinia* both forgive me;
A flood of tenderness comes o'er my soul;
I cannot speak—I love! forgive! and pity thee.—

Alt. I thought that nothing could have stay'd my soul,
That long ere this her flight had reach'd the stars;
But thy known voice has lur'd her back again.
Methinks I fain would set all right with thee,
Make up this most unlucky breach, and then,
With thine and Heav'n's forgiveness on my soul,
Shrink to my grave, and be at ease for ever,

Hor. By Heav'n my heart bleeds for thee; ev'n this
I feel thy pangs of disappointed love. [*moment,*
Is it not pity that this youth should fall,
That all his wond'rous goodness should be lost,
And the world never know it? Oh, my *Altamont*!
Give me thy sorrows, let me bear 'em for thee,
And shelter thee from ruin.

Lav. Oh my brother!
Think not but we will share in all thy woes,
We'll fit all day, and tell sad tales of love:
And when we light upon some faithless woman,
Some beauty, like *Calista*, false and fair,
We'll fix our grief, and our complaining there;
We'll curse the nymph that drew the ruin on,
And mourn the youth that was like thee undone.

[*Exeunt.*

A C T V.

SCENE, *A room hung with black; on one side Lothario's body on a bier; on the other, a table, with a scull and other bones, a book and a lamp on it.*

Calista is discover'd on a couch in black; her hair hanging loose and disorder'd: after music and a song, she rises and comes forward.

S O N G.

I.

HEAR, you midnight phantoms bear,
 You who pale and wan appear,
 And fill the wretch, who wakes, with fear,
 You who wander, scream, and groan
 Round the mansions once your own,
 You, whom still your crimes upbraid,
 You, who rest not with the dead;
 From the coverts where you stray,
 Where you lurk, and shun the day,
 From the charnel and the tomb,
 Hither haste ye, hither come.

II.

Chide Calista for delay,
 Tell her 'tis for her, you stay;
 Bid her die, and come away.
 See the sexton with his spade,
 See the grave already made;
 Listen, fair one, to thy knell,
 This music is thy passing bell.

Cal. 'Tis well! these solemn sounds, this pomp of
 Are fit to feed the frenzy in my soul;
 Here's room for meditation ev'n to madness,
 'Till the mind burst with thinking. This dull flame
 Sleeps in the socket. Sure the book was left
 To tell me something; ——— for instruction then ———
 He teaches holy sorrow, and contrition,
 And penitence; ——— Is it become an art then?
 A trick that lazy, dull, luxurious gownmen

Can

7 MA 56

Act.V.

FAIR PENITENT.

Scene 1.



Stodhard del.

Published July 10th 1783 by T&W Lowndes.

Heath sculp.

M^{rs} SIDDONS as CALISTA.

*I have more real anguish in my heart,
Than all their pedant discipline e'er knew.*

Can teach us to do over? I'll no more on't;

[*Throwing away the book.*]

I have more real anguish in my heart,
Than all their pedant discipline e'er knew.
What charnel has been rifled for these bones?
Fy! this is pageantry; they look uncoothly.
But what of that? If he or she that own'd 'em,
Safe from disquiet sit, and smile to see
The farce their miserable relicts play.
But here's a sight is terrible indeed;
Is this that haughty, gallant, gay *Lothario*,
That dear perfidious—Ah!—how pale he looks!
How grim with clotted blood; and those dead eyes!
Ascend, ye ghosts, fantastic forms of night,
In all your diff'rent dreadful shapes ascend,
And match the present horror, if you can.

Enter Sciolto.

Sci. This dead of night, this silent hour of darkness,
Nature for rest ordain'd, and soft repose;
And yet distraction, and tumultuous jars,
Keep all our frightened citizens awake:
'The senate, weak, divided and irresolute,
Want pow'r to succour the afflicted state.
Vainly in words and long debates they're wise,
While the fierce factions scorn their peaceful orders,
And drown the voice of law in noise and anarchy.
Amidst the general wreck, see where she stands,

[*Pointing to Calista.*]

Like *Helen*, in the night when *Trey* was sack'd,
Spectatress of the mischief which she made.

Cal. It is *Sciolto*! be thyself, my soul;
Be strong to bear his fatal indignation,
That he may see thou art not lost so far,
But somewhat still of his great spirit lives.
In the forlorn *Calista*.

Sci. Thou wert once
My daughter.

Cal. Happy were it I had died,
And never lost that name.

Sci. That's something yet.
Thou wert the very darling of my age;
I thought the day too short to gaze upon thee;
That all the blessings I could gather upon thee,

By cares on earth, and by my pray'rs to Heav'n,
Were little for my fondness to bestow;
Why, dost thou turn to folly then and curse me?

Cal. Because my soul was rudely drawn from yours;
A poor imperfect copy of my father,
Where goodness, and the strength of manly virtue,
Was thinly planted, and the idle void
Fill'd up with light-belief, and easy fondness;
It was, because I lov'd, and was a woman.

Sci. Hadst thou been honest, thou hadst been a che-
But of that joy, as of a gem long lost, [rubin;
Beyond redemption gone, think we no more.
Hast thou e'er dar'd to meditate on death?

Cal. I have, as on the end of shame and sorrow.

Sci. Ha! answer me! say, hast thou coolly thought?
'Tis not the Stoic's lesson got by rote,
The pomp of words, and pedant dissertations,
That can sustain thee in that hour of terror:
Books have taught cowards to talk nobly of it,
But when the trial comes, they start, and stand aghast;
Hast thou consider'd what may happen after it?
How thy account may stand, and what to answer?

Cal. I've turn'd my eyes inward upon myself,
Where foul offence, and shame have laid all waste;
'Therefore my soul abhors the wretched dwelling,
And longs to find some better place of rest.

Sci. 'Tis justly thought, and worthy of that spirit
That dwelt in ancient *Latian* breasts, when *Rome*
Was mistress of the world. I would go on,
And tell thee all my purpose, but it sticks
Here at my heart, and cannot find a way.

Cal. Then spare the telling, if it be a pain,
And write the meaning with your ponyard here.

Sci. Oh! truly guess'd—seest thou this trembling
hand— [Holding up a dagger.
Thrice justice urg'd—and thrice the slack'ning sinews
Forgot their office, and confess the father;
At length the stubborn virtue has prevail'd;
It must, it must be so—Oh! take it then,

[Giving the dagger.

And know the rest untaught.

Cal. I understand you,

It

It is but thus, and both are satisfied.

[*She offers to kill herself, Sciolto catches hold of her arm.*]

Sci. A moment, give me yet a moment's space.
The stern, the rigid judge has been obey'd;
Now nature, and the father, claim their turns.
I've held the balance with an iron hand,
And put off ev'ry tender, human thought,
To doom my child to death; but spare my eyes
The most unnatural sight, lest their strings crack,
And my old brain split, and grow mad with horror.

Cal. Ha! Is it possible? and is there yet
Some little, dear remain of love and tenderness,
For poor, undone *Calista*, in your heart?

Sci. Oh! when I think what pleasure I took in thee,
What joys thou gav'st me in thy prattling infancy,
Thy sprightly wit, and early blooming beauty,
How I have stood, and fed my eyes upon thee,
Then lifted up my hands, and wondring blest thee;
By my strong grief, my heart ev'n melts within me,
I could curse nature, and that tyrant, honor,
For making me thy father, and thy judge;
Thou art my daughter still.

Cal. For that kind word,
Thus let me fall, thus humbly to the earth;
Weep on your feet, and bless you for this goodness;
Oh! 'tis too much for this offending wretch,
This parricide, that murders with her crimes,
Shortens her father's age, and cuts him off,
Ere little more than half his years be number'd.

Sci. Would it were otherwise—but thou must die.—

Cal. That I must die! it is my only comfort;
Death is the privilege of human nature,
And life without it were not worth our taking;
Thither the poor, the pris'ner, and the mourner,
Fly for relief, and lay their burdens down.
Come then, and take me now to thy cold arms,
Thou meagre shade; here let me breathe my last,
Charm'd with my father's pity and forgiveness,
More than if angels tun'd their golden viols,
And sung a *requiem* to my parting soul. [me,

Sci. I'm summon'd hence, ere this my friends expect
There is I know not what of sad presage,

That tells me, I shall never see thee more;
 If it be so, this is our last farewell,
 And these the parting pangs, which nature feels,
 When anguish rends the heart-strings——Oh! my
 Daughter! [Exit Sciolto.

Cal. Now think, thou curst *Calista*, now behold
 The desolation, horror, blood and ruin,
 Thy crimes and fatal folly spread around,
 That loudly cry for vengeance on thy head;
 Yet Heav'n, who knows our weak imperfect natures,
 How blind with passions, and how prone to evil,
 Makes not too strict inquiry for offences,
 But is aton'd by penitence and pray'r:
 Cheap recompence! here 'twould not be receiv'd,
 Nothing but blood can make the expiation,
 And cleanse the soul from inbred, deep pollution.
 And see, another injur'd wretch is come,
 To call for justice from my tardy hand.

Enter Altamont.

Alt. Hail to your horrors! hail thou house of death!
 And thou the lovely mistress of these shades,
 Whose beauty gilds the more than midnight darkness,
 And makes it grateful as the dawn of day.
 Oh! take me in a fellow-mourner with thee,
 I'll number groan for groan, and tear for tear;
 And when the fountains of thy eyes are dry,
 Mine shall supply the stream, and weep for both.

Cal. I know thee well, thou art the injur'd *Altamont*,
 Thou com'st to urge me with the wrongs I've done thee;
 But know I stand upon the brink of life,
 And in a moment mean to set me free
 From shame, and thy upbraiding.

Alt. Falsly, falsly
 Dost thou accuse me; when did I complain,
 Or murmur at my fate? For thee I have
 Forgot the temper of *Italian* husbands,
 And fondness has prevail'd upon revenge;
 I bore my load of infamy with patience,
 As holy men do punishments from Heav'n,
 Nor thought it hard, because it came from thee:
 Oh! then forbid me not to mourn thy loss,
 To wish some better fate had rul'd our loves,
 And that *Calista* had been mine, and true.

Cal.

Cal. Oh, *Altamont*! 'tis hard for souls like mine,
 Haughty and fierce, to yield they've done amiss;
 But oh! behold my proud, disdainful heart,
 Bends to thy gentler virtue; yes, I own
 Such is thy truth, thy tenderness, and love,
 Such are the graces that adorn thy youth,
 That were I not abandon'd to destruction,
 With thee I might have liv'd, for ages blest,
 And died in peace within thy faithful arms.

Alt. Then happiness is still within our reach;
 Here let remembrance lose our past misfortunes,
 Tear all records that hold the fatal story;
 Here let our joys begin, from hence go on
 In long successive order.

Cal. What! in death?

Alt. Then art thou fix'd to die—But be it so,
 We'll go together, my advent'rous love
 Shall follow thee to those uncertain beings;
 Whether our lifeless shades are doom'd to wander
 In gloomy groves, with discontented ghosts;
 Or whether thro' the upper air we fleet,
 And tread the fields of light, still I'll pursue thee,
 'Till fate ordains that we shall part no more.

Cal. Oh no! Heav'n has some better lot in store
 To crown thee with; live, and be happy long;
 Live for some maid that shall deserve thy goodness,
 Some kind unpractis'd heart, that never yet
 Has listen'd to the false ones of thy sex,
 Nor known the arts of ours; she shall reward thee,
 Meet thee with virtues equal to thy own,
 Charm thee with sweetness, beauty, and with truth,
 Be blest in thee alone, and thou in her.

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Now mourn indeed, ye miserable pair,
 For now the measure of your woes is full.

Alt. What dost thou mean, *Horatio*?

Hor. Oh! 'tis dreadful:

The great, the good *Scioltio* dies this moment.

Cal. My father!

Alt. That's a deadly stroke indeed.

Hor. Not long ago he privately went forth,
 Attended but by few, and those unbidden;
 I heard which way he took, and strait pursu'd him,

But

But found him compass'd by *Lothario's* faction,
 Almost lone, amidst a crowd of foes ;
 Too late we brought him aid, and drove them back ;
 Ere that his frantic valor had provok'd
 The death he seem'd to wish for from their swords.

Cal. And dost thou bear me yet, thou patient earth ?
 Dost thou not labor with my murd'rous weight ?
 And you, ye glitt'ring heav'nly host of stars,
 Hide your fair heads in clouds, or I shall blast you,
 For I am all contagion, death, and ruin,
 And nature sickens at me ; rest, thou world,
 This parricide shall be thy plague no more ;
 Thus, thus, I set thee free. [Stabs herself.]

Hor. Oh ! fatal rashness !

Alt. Thou dost instruct we well ; to lengthen life,
 Is but a trifle now.

[*Altamont offers to kill himself ; Horatio prevents him, and wrests his sword from him.*]

Hor. Ha ! what means
 The frantic *Altamont* ? Some foe to man,
 Has breath'd on ev'ry breast contagious fury,
 And epidemic madness.

Enter Sciolto, pale and bloody, supported by Servants.

Cal. Oh, my heart !
 Well may'st thou ~~die~~ for see the spring that fed
 Thy vital stream is wasted, and runs low.
 My father ! will you now at last forgive me,
 If after all my crimes, and all your sufferings,
 I call you once again by that dear name ?
 Will you forget my shame, and those wide wounds,
 Lift up your hand, and bless me ere I go
 Down to my dark abode ?

Sci. Alas ! my daughter !
 Thou hast rashly ventur'd in a stormy sea,
 Where life, fame, virtue, all were wreck'd and lost ;
 But sure thou'st borne thy part in all the anguish,
 And smarted with the pain ; then rest in peace,
 Let silence and oblivion hide thy name,
 And save thee from the malice of posterity ;
 And may'st thou find with Heav'n the same forgiveness,
 As with thy father here.—Die, and be happy.

Cal. Celestial sounds ! Peace dawns upon my soul,
 And ev'ry pain grows less—Oh ! gentle *Altamont*,
Think

Think not too hardly of me when I'm gone,
 But pity me——Had I but early known
 Thy wond'rous worth, thou excellent young man,
 We had been happier both : ——Now 'tis too late,
 And yet my eyes take pleasure to behold thee,
 Thou art their last dear object.——Mercy, Heav'n!

[*She dies.*

Alt. Cold! dead and cold! and yet thou art not
 But lovely still! Hadst thou a thousand faults, [*chang'd,*
 What heart so hard, what virtue so severe,
 But at that beauty must of force relent,
 Melted to pity, love, and to forgiveness?

Sci. Oh! turn thee from that fatal object; *Altamont,*
 Come near, and let me bless thee ere I die.
 To thee, and brave *Horatio* I bequeath
 My fortunes.—Lay me by thy noble father,
 And love my mem'ry as thou hast done his,
 For thou hast been my son.—Oh! gracious Heav'n!
 Thou that hast endless blessings still in store,
 For virtue, and for filial piety,
 Let grief, disgrace, and want be far away,
 But multiply thy mercies on his head;
 Let honour, greatness, goodness, still be with him,
 And peace in all his ways.——

[*He dies.*

Alt. Take, take it all;
 To thee, *Horatio*, I resign the gift,
 While I pursue my father and my love,
 And find my only portion in the grave.

Hor. The storm of grief bears hard upon his youth,
 And bends him like a drooping flower to earth.
 Raise him, and bear him in. [*Altamont is carried off.*
 By such examples are we taught to prove,
 The sorrows that attend unlawful love;
 Death, or some worse misfortunes, soon divide
 The injur'd bridegroom from his guilty bride:
 If you would have the nuptial union last,
 Let virtue be the bond that ties it fast.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

EPI.

EPILOGUE.

YOU see the tripping dame could find no favor,
 Dearly she paid for breach of good behavior,
 Nor could her loving husband's fondness save her. }
 Italian ladies lead but scurvy lives,
 There's dreadful dealing with eloping wives;
 Thus 'tis, because these husbands are obey'd
 By force of laws, which for themselves they made.
 With tales of old prescriptions they confine }
 The right of marriage-rule to their male line,
 And buff, and domineer, by right divine.
 Had we the pow'r, we'd make the tyrants know
 What 'tis to fail in duties which they owe;
 We'd teach the sant'ring squire, who loves to roam,
 Forgetful of his own dear spouse at home,
 Who snores at night supinely by her side,
 'Twas not for this the nuptial knot was tied.
 The plodding petty-fogger, and the cit,
 Have learn'd at least this modern way of wit:
 Each ill-bred senseless rogue, tho' ne'er so dull,
 Has th' impudence to think his wife a fool;
 He spends the night, where merry wags resort,
 With joking clubs, and eighteen-penny port;
 While she poor soul's contented to regale,
 By a sad sea-coal fire, with wigs and ale.
 Well may the cuckold-making tribe find grace,
 And fill an absent husband's empty place:
 If you would e'er bring constancy in fashion,
 You men must first begin the reformation.
 Then shall the golden age of love return,
 No turtle for her wand'ring mate shall mourn,
 No foreign charms shall cause domestic strife,
 But ev'ry married man shall toast his wife;
 Phillis shall not be to the country sent,
 For carnivals in town to keep a tedious Lent:
 Lampoons shall cease, and envious scandal die,
 And all shall live in peace, like my good man and I.

THE

7 NA 35



S. Vander Gucht In d. S.

THE
B I T E R.
A
COMEDY.

*Sed quid opus teneras Mordaci radere vero
Auriculas? Videſis, ne majorum tibe fortè
Limina frigeſcant; ſonat hic de nare canina
Litera.*

Perſ. Sat. 1.



P R O L O G U E.

YOU, who in furious factions take delight,
 Know, you are not to be regal'd to-night;
 These scenes do no one sparing blow afford,
 But peace and moderation is the word:
 No side, nor man on either side is hit,
 We single out no courtier, clown, or cit,
 And if you're angry, 'tis all wrong, you're bit.
 Nor let the well-bred man, of parts and taste,
 Look sharp for dainties at a country feast;
 Expect no sprightly turns nor language here,
 But rest contented with your homely chear,
 'Tis such as we could get at Croydon fair.
 Our men of mirth have never been at court,
 Where Beaux and Belles and gentler wits resort,
 Biters indeed! and of the better sort.
 To bare bambooz'ling we may chance pretend,
 Or by the christen name to catch a friend;
 But to some happier wit we leave to tell
 Of those who in true biting most excel,
 For that great work old bards shall rise again,
 And the Sicilian maids renew the lofty strain.

Let not a rival writer stir up spite
 In you, who judge of comedy, or writ;
 For tho' fond parents on their offspring dote.
 And ev'ry idiot author loves the brat he got;
 Yet ours gives freely up his Petit Piece,
 And swears that you may use it as you please.
 Nay, should you take his drolling in good part,
 He owns this only as a youthful start,
 And sets no claim up to the comic art.
 So when keen patriots pursue the chace,
 The shifting statesman yields and sues for grace,
 And to preserve his carcase quits his place.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Sir Timothy Tallapoy,	-	-	Mr. Betterton.
Pinch,	-	-	Mr. Pack.
Clerimont,	-	-	Mr. Verbruggen.
Friendly,	-	-	Mr. Booth.
Scribblecrabble,	-	-	Mr. Leigh.
Bandileer,	-	-	Mr. Knap.
Trick,	-	-	Mr. Fieldhouse.
Grumble,	-	-	Mr. Trout.
Bohee,	-	-	Mr. Freeman.

W O M E N.

Lady Stale,	-	Mrs. Leigh.
Mariana,	-	Mrs. Bracegirdle.
Angelica,	-	Mrs. Mountfort.
Mrs. Clever	-	Mrs. Barry.
Mrs. Scribblecrabble,	-	Mrs. Lawfon.

Servants belonging to Sir *Timothy*. Two whores.

S C E N E, Croydon.

THE
B I T E R.

ACT I.

SCENE, *A Country Town.*

Enter Clerimont.

Cler. **F***riendly* stays somewhat long, for so passionate a person as he seems to be. This laziness in love looks as if matrimony had gone before, and the best part of the business had been over.—Oh *Trick!*

Enter Trick.

Where's your master?

Trick. He'll be here in a minute, Sir; just get rid of a little misfortune that follows him.

Cler. Misfortune! What misfortune?

Trick. My Lady *Stale*.

Cler. The devil? Is she with him?

Trick. Too true, Sir;—Your ancient gentlewoman is a tenacious animal—they seldom lose their hold 'till they have drawn blood;—tho' to give my master his due, he lives after a frank manner enough with her;—he'll make no scruple of dropping her, leave her to dabble about the fair by herself, at the first stop she makes; and we shall have him here presently—See, didn't I tell you so, Sir?

Enter Friendly.

Fri. Dear *Clerimont*, I have ten thousand pardons to beg of you; I trespass upon your patience at a strange rate.

Cler. Dear Sir, truce with your compliments; and if you please, let us come to the matter in hand—yon new house is my uncle's.

Trick.

Trick. 'Twould ha' made your honour a pretty feat, if you had not fallen out with him.

Cler. He has ben there with his daughter these three days,——you are in love with her, have a mind to marry her,—he's a fantastical obdinate old fellow, and resolves against parting either with her or his money, but to a coxcomb of his own choosin'; who (by the way) came down in the same coach with me to-day,——so that unless we can find out some stratagem to make an ass of him, and a happy man of you, poor *Angelica* must die a maid, or marry the fool, as aforesaid.

Fri. In order to that we have already taken all measures, tho' I must own I apprehend some difficulty in the execution of 'em.——Did the booby lover that came with you, know you?

Cler. Not at all.—I'll assure you he's a most extraordinary person, and a biter, as his miserable fellow-travelers, the very coachman, and indeed every body we met upon the road, found to their cost.

Fri. The devil he is! That new generation of wags are the most insufferable teizers!—It happens luckily enough; for your uncle has met with 'em somewhere or other, and I suppose has been bit to the purpose, for he raves at the very mention of the word, swears 'tis a villainous design to corrupt all our morality, and breed up our youth in the practice of early lying; he hopes to see it made felony by act of Parliament.—I perceive my rival will hardly prove so formidable as we took him to be.

Trick. Fear nothing, Sir; rug's the word, all's safe. For the old gentleman, leave him to me. This fair-time gives his country neighbours a liberty of coming to his house, tho' the inside of it at another time is as hard to be seen as a fortified place in the time of war,——but the devil's in him if he can keep us out now:—I have engaged too or three very pretty fellows here of the town to be of the party with us, smart dogs for the contriving part, and of most invincible passive courage to go thro' with the execution,—they have had the honour to be beaten black and blue in several adventures already.

Cler. For the rest, the lovely *Mariana*, your charming kinswoman, has engag'd a notable limb of the law, a city solicitor; in your interests;——if there be any thing in his way of roguery to do you service you may depend

depend upon him. My uncle is luckily enough too in love with *Mariana*, to a very ridiculous extravagance; and when a woman of wit and beauty has an old fellow under those circumstances, she seldom fails of a secret to make him pliant.

Fri. But can you, who are so delicate a lover, allow *Mariana* to make any advances to this extravagant uncle of yours?

Cler. To trust you then with a secret of the last importance, you must know I have been married to her this week.

Fri. To *Mariana*!

Cler. She has made me the happiest man in the world.

Fri. Does your uncle know any thing of this matter?

Cler. Not a syllable, I have been so long upon scurvy terms with him, that I thought 'twould be to little purpose to ask his consent.

Trick. Sir, Sir, as I live, yonder's Mrs. *Clever*;—Mr. *Clerimont* is in disgrace with his uncle, and I being in somewhat scoundrelish, or, as your honour calls it, [*To Cler.*] scurvy terms with him myself, what if we should retain her for an opening council towards him?

Cler. Ha! lucky enough.

Fri. 'Sdeath! she's an intimate friend of my Lady *Stale*'s.

Trick. Ah dear Sir, she hath a violent passion for money;—she loves it better, not than any thing, I wo'nt say that of her neither, but then any friend that ever she had, from her god-fathers and god-mothers to the last new acquaintance she made.

Cler. Pr'ythee call her—I have been mightily in her books of late.

Trick. Hum! not altogether so proper just now;—my Lady *Stale* has join'd her, and they are both coming this way.

Fri. Let's be gone;—I would not see her.—And d'ye hear, Sirrah, contrive some way to rid us of my Lady *Stale*;—that unlucky amorous five and forty face of hers is a mere omen of ill fortune,—I wish we may never meet her 'till our projects are past crossing.

Trick. I warrant you, Sir: and for Mrs. *Clever*, you may reckon the thing done;—you may depend upon her,

as

as much as the *French King* does upon his cousin of *Bavaria*. [Exeunt.]

Enter Lady Stale and Mrs. Clever.

Stale. Well, dear *Clever*, never talk, for this *Croydon* is a most insufferable filthy place.

Clev. There's a great deal of hurry, dust, and noise, indeed. And yet so there are at *May fair* and *Bartholomew fair*, where all the world come. Methinks this place is as diverting as those are, and the people are as merry here as there, tho' they are not so well dress'd.

Stale. Dress'd! the creatures! why, child, dressing's a reasonable thing—one must have a fine wit, delicate and well turn'd, to be able to dress—the things that come here never think, they love walnuts and sack, and fat goose, and seeing of monsters, and laughing à *Gorge déployée*, but they never think.—Well, I am perfectly glad I have met thee. I'll swear I believe I am the only woman of condition here.—I'll swear I'm in the last confusion to think I could have so much complaisance for *Friendly* to come hither.—I'll swear I believe you must think me furiously fond, to let him engage me in a party so horribly upon the ridiculous.

Clev. We have dropt him some where in the crowd; and I fancy 'tis that makes you so uneasy.—Come, Madam, confess, is it not jealousy, rather than complaisance, engages you in all *Friendly's* parties? To give the man his due, methought he was not so very pressing for your company hither.

Stale. Jealous! poor *Clever*! I jealous of the fellow! I swear, Madam, you're as much mistaken, Madam, as perhaps you ever were in your life, Madam. After all, when one is made so very much to one's advantage, so agreeable, so handsome, so every thing in the world, and when one has so fine a discernment to understand it very well one's self. Jealousy is a passion that perhaps after all is as little troublesome as any passion in the world.

Clev. Oh, Madam! all the world must confess how bountiful nature has been to you, even to the last prodigality of gifts and graces.

Stale. Why really, and between friends, child, I don't think my person has done nature one jot of discredit—What do you think? ha! as long as good faces have been in fashion, she never finish'd one more to her reputation.

Clev.

Clev. Ay, ay, Madam, take your person all together, you have all the reason in the world to be satisfied with it.

Stale. Nay, my dear, that I am; upon my word;—for, as I was saying, I think I may, without affectation, aver that I am handsome, rich, nay and young too, in spite of all the little insignificant world may say to the contrary.

Clev. Why that's true—that same world is the devil—the ridiculous ways they have got in that world!—You shall have 'em, when they are vex'd at their hearts that they grow old themselves, fancy that every body else grows old in proportion as they do: You shall have 'em, because they happen'd to dance at a ball with a woman, in the merry days of King *Charles* the second, cry, smother the reverend gentlewoman; tho' she has as much cherry-colour'd ribbon, and black hair fruz'd out as any toast of 'em all, and never miss'd the front box of a new play these thirty years.

Stale. The world is full of impertinences—but you may take my word for it, that I am young, very young.

Clev. Oh dear Madam! you don't think there is any occasion to convince me of it?

Stale. No, child, not at all as to that;—but besides now, besides all these accomplishments, I ought to pique myself somewhat upon my birth and family.

Clev. Why, that is very hard now, as to this damn'd world again.

Stale. As how, dear *Clever*?

Clev. As how? why that there should be such a thing as scandal—that virtue and merit, like your Ladyship's, should run the gantlet thro' so many visiting days every week.—Why, I believe I have heard a thousand people say, that you never had father or mother, uncle or aunt, sister or brother, that yourself or any other body knew of—nay, not so much as a husband, tho' your Ladyship has had the misfortune to be a disconsolate widow for so many years last past.

Stale. This is pleasant, I vow! but dear *Clever*, this is particularly pleasant—the ridiculous world! as if every body did not know my family.—I'd have 'em to comprehend I have two as fine young gentlemen as ever wore gown at the university—the worst of 'em (and indeed I

think that is *Jeremy*) the worst of them understands *Hebrew*——And then my neice at *Hackney* is the prettiest witty creature.

Clev. Ah, Madam, 'tis not your fertility is in question, no body can have the impudence to dispute that part of your family——your posterity is all safe, but 'tis concerning your illustrious ancestors that the doubt is rais'd.

Stale. Folly to the last degree!——I swear you begin to be mighty entertaining.

Clev. You'll pardon me, Madam, that I have dealt so very freely with your Ladyship——you'll allow for the sincerity of friendship.

Stale. Oh by all means, my dear, you wrong me to suspect the contrary——I have wit enough to be above the little envy of those talking things——besides I am rich, have a fortune, *Argent Comptant*, child.

Clev. A fortune!

Stale. Ay, *Clever*, a fortune.

Clev. Nay, then I don't wonder at your being above what the world can say of you.—Positively nobody can be out of humour that has money enough.

Stale. I think I have some kind of an inclination to Mr. *Friendly*——the man loves me to folly;——I am pleas'd he should do so, and, in short, I intend he shall marry me within these two days.

Clev. Well, Madam, I wish you good success——but the world, that has been so ill-natur'd to dispute one husband with you, may try to hinder you of another——therefore have a care, and make sure of your man while you can have him.—Between the wars abroad, and the many pressing occasions at home, men are scarce.

Enter Mariana.

Mar. My Lady *Stale*! Is it possible that I should meet you here?

Stale. *Mariana*! this is the very predestination of good fortune——my dear, dear, incomparable dear!——But child! what, are you alone?

Mar. Oh, no, Madam,——the diversions of this place draw so much company to 'em, that 'twould be almost impossible to come alone, especially in a stage-coach.—To deal freely with you, I came hither upon an engagement with Mr. *Clerimont*.

Stale. And the rest of your company?

Mar.

Mar. Gallant and engaging to the last degree. A templer, a lady of wit and pleasure, and a notable man of business out of the city.

Clev. I suppose your Ladyship can give a very good account of the inns-of-court gallantry?

Mar. Oh, Mrs. *Clever*, your servant.—You have brought your usual good-humour hither, I see.

Clev. I am always very much at your service, Madam.

Stale. Well, but how have you dispos'd of your company?

Mar. All dispers'd—my young squire was taken up with four or five fine ladies in masks.

Stale. And your lady of pleasure?

Mar. With a knot of rakes.—And my man of business is engag'd in an affair of consequence.

Stale. An affair of consequence at *Croydon*!

Mar. Ay, I'll assure you, and very great too.—A whim took him to give himself a t'other end o' the town kind of an air, and he would not pay the coachman—whereupon—

Clev. I suppose he beat him.

Mar. Even so from top to toe—he had just finish'd him when I left 'em.

Stale. Very pleasant!—But, my dear, have you met with no adventures yourself?

Mar. Oh with a very good one, I assure you:—A grenadier of the guards proffer'd to treat me with burnt brandy and sausages.

Clev. Very gallant!

Stale. Oh shocking! But 'tis like the horrible place—I swear, my dear, we ought never to be forgiven for coming hither.

Clev. Oh dear Madam, be composed, I beseech you—my life on't, you meet with none of those insolencies. Such little wild young creatures as *Mariana* can't avoid the impertinence of an impudent young fellow; but he must be a grenadier indeed that would attack your Ladyship.

Enter Mr. Scribblescrabble, bloody and dirty.

Mar. Ah dear Mr. *Scribblescrabble*! I rejoice to see you—I am glad you're got out of the clutches of that unmerciful pounding coachman.

Scrib. Ah de-de-dear Madam, your slave, your slave, nothing in the earth, a te-te-trifle, a trifle.

Stale. Is this the lawyer, child?

Mar. The same

Scrib. One always meets with your me-me-merry wags, and your comical jo-jokes, Madam, at fairs and such like places;—for my part, I came a pu-pu-pu-purpose——

Mar. To be beaten? A very whimsical design, very far from a jest, and in my opinion went off very tragically on your side.

Scrib. Not at all, Madam, not at all, a te-te-trifle, a trifle.

Mar. Your nose bleeds sadly.

Scrib. Nothing at all, very good, very wholesome; I always bleed spring and fall.

Clev. Men of gallantry turn every thing into good humour and mirth:—I know Mr. *Scribblescrabble* of old, always a wag.

Scrib. Ah! *Na-Na-Nanny! Nanny Clever!* By *Je-Je-Jericho* I am glad to see thee.

Clev. He's a great man at adventures.—the farthing *Pye-houses* in *Moorfields* ring of him.

Stale. Well, to have adventures is always a mark of a man of condition, Mr. *Scribblescrabble*, give me leave to felicitate your good fortune.

Mar. Ah dear Madam, you don't know him.——He's intimate with all the agreeable rakes about town, wears a lac'd hat with a smart pinch in vacation-time, and plays at picket at the *Temple* chocolate-houses.

Scrib. Tr-truly, Madam, if it were not discountenanced in the city, I do think a de-de-demy castor, with a fashionable edging, a very ge-ge-gentleman-like kind of an ornament.

Clev. He is a very terror to all the husbands of the ward he lives in,—two chandlers wives, besides a haberdasher of small wares's daughter, have been turn'd out of doors for him within this half year.

Scrib. Ah me-me-mere waggery, Sc-Sc-Scandal.—What should the ladies see in me?

Clev. Oh that spirit, that wit, that agreeable freedom.

Scrib. Something of a fr-fr-frank manner, Madam; ah, ah, ah,—but wh-what's that, what's that, Madam?—But how come you to know me! I value myself upon being close.

Clev.

Clev. What, d'ye think the world knows nothing? But besides, whatsoever he says, he loves to make a noise with his adventures.

Scrib. Aa, fy, fy, fy,—no, no, no.

[*Making an ugly face.*]

Stale. Pretty expressions of his passion!

Clev. Then 'tis the little peevishest creature, rather than not quarrel he'll quarrel and box with his mistress herself; then she, you know, naturally resists, then an uproar, out comes the Prentices.—

Stale. What! engage with the domesticks?

Clev. Up with paring-shovels, blows abound, and the lover is ruefully beaten for the close of his adventure.

Mar. Suffering for the ladies is gallant; and you see love is his *foible*. But what says poor Madam *Scribble-scrabble* to all this?

Scrib. A a a.

Stale. His wife? What? has he a wife? Oh unfaithful Mr. *Scribble-scrabble*!

Scrib. Na-na-name her not, name her her not, I say.

Clev. Marry but we will tho'—since, to her praise be it spoken, she's an example to the whole parish for patience and good housewifery.

Scrib. Shall I tell you? My dru-drudge, my convenience, my patient *griffel*,—she in the be-be-ballad was a type of her, and I am her n-n-noble Marquis, her Lord, her great *Turk*, by *Je-Jericho*.

Stale. What a barbarous little gallant person it is!

Mar. Why didn't you bring her with you to-day?

Scrib. What, about bu-bu-bus'ness?—Inco-co-congruous, Madam.—No, I left her, I left her—

Clev. Pensively at home, I warrant you.

Scrib. Mending the foul clothes, and the childrens stockings;—but let us leave her to her co-co-cow-heel and pint of ale, and talk of other matters——Have you seen Mem-Mem-Mr. —? [To Mariana.]

Mar. [*aside.*] Hush! a word with you,—No naming of names——hark in your ear.

[Mariana *whispers* *Scribble-scrabble*.]

Clev. You see, Madam, what a base world it is, how false the men, and how miserable the women are:—The very *Scribble-scrabbles* of the city have got into the way of despising their wives.

Stale. 'Tis too true, Child; and there are very few in this fantastical age, that the greatest merit can oblige to constancy:—And if I didn't think *Friendly* a man that had a very exact *gout* for merit, one that enter'd very far into merit, extremely far, almost as far as 'tis possible for one to enter into merit, I should hardly trust myself in his, or any man's hands.

Clev. Look ye, Madam, he may enter into merit as far as another, I don't dispute that, Madam; but how will you keep him from being weary of merit, and having his belly full of merit, as they say, getting rid of merit, turns merit off again?

Stale. For that, child, I trust to my merit, 'tis my own, I know it, and I trust to it.

Clev. Matrimony's an uncertain game.

Stale. 'Tis so.—But you know we women love play. Besides, railery apart, my physicians tell me, that I shall never be free from the tooth-ach, vapours, and a scurvy humour that haunts me spring and fall, 'till, ah! ah! (you'll pardon the misfortune of my constitution) 'till I have another child.—Nay, they say if I had twins 'twould be better, and go more to the bottom of my distemper.

Clev. Nay, then you had best get your ingredients together, and go into the course as soon as possible, for fear the season of physic should be over.

Stale. My dear, I see you're busy. [*To Mariana.*] We'll go on before.

Mar. But a word, Madam, and I wait on you.

Stale. *Clever* and I'll walk on before—you'll overtake us before we get to the monsters,——I have a strange fancy for monsters.

Clev. Did your Ladyship ever see the *Mantegur*?

Stale. Oh dear! no—he was a very obscene monster—he was obscene, rude, very rude and beastly—but the *Womantegur*——

Clev. His Lady?

Stale. ——was very well bred, and had a great deal of wit.—This is her day, I believe; if she sees company here, we'll visit her.

Clev. With all my heart.

[*Exeunt.*]

Mar. Look ye, be careful, and you may expect every thing from Mr. *Friendly's* bounty; for *Clerimont's* uncle

uncle, I'll undertake he shall set his name to the deeds when they are ready.

Scrib. 'Tis enough; they are here in pu-pu-presto in my green bag here; I want nothing but the old ge-ge-gentleman's name to fill up the blanks with.

Mar. For that I can inform you—he writes himself Sir *Timothy Tallapoy* of *Kingquangcungxi*.

Scrib. What a pu-pu-plaguy Pagan n-name is that for a protestant pu-pu-parish!

Mar. 'Tis a name he has given to a new house he has built hard by here. You must know he has got his estate by the *China* trade in the *East-Indies*, and at that time grew so fantastically fond of the manners, language, habit, and every thing that relates to those people, that he prefers 'em not only before those of his own country, but all the world besides. 'Tis ridiculous enough to see how he makes himself be dress'd and serv'd exactly after the *Chinese* manner.

Scrib. Ve-very whimsical, fe-fe-faith and troth.

Mar. But huiht!—here's our fellow-traveller, the semple wag, that came down in the coach with us.

Enter Pinch and two women in masks.

Pinch. You tell me you are very passionate—

1 Mask. What, are you such a monster not to believe me when I swear?

Pinch. It is really inconsistent.—You have known me but two minutes and a half, and you intend to bamboozle me out of a beef-stake.

1 Mask. Nut for that, my dear, indeed;—but if we should dine together we should be so facetious—and I can tell you something of somebody that lodges at the *Black-boy and Still* in a certain place.

2 Mask. Hark ye, Madam, come away, Madam,—We won't be beholding to the pimp.

1 Mask. No, pray stay, Madam; I'll assure you Madam, I know the gentleman,—he is a relation of mine, and——

Pinch. Bite!

2 Mask. What d'ye mean, pimp? ha pimp! What's bite, Pimp? Will you give us a bottle of wine, or no, Pimp?

Pinch. Why then I tell you no—And now I have told you my mind without a bite, pox.

2 *Mask*. Dammee, Madam, come away, Madam;—there's Madam *Foefstocking* at the *Greyhound*—she has brought down a couple of bob wigs out of *Cheapside*, shall treat us both.—Look ye, pimp, I shall meet you some night or other in the play-house passage, and then I'll bite you, I will so, pimp you! [*Exeunt Masks*.]

Mar. Mr. *Pinch*, your servant;—I vow I'm afraid you're very ill-natur'd—you treated your ladies very roughly, methought.

Pinch. Oh no, dear Madam, by no means Madam—I am fond of the fair to the last degree; by the solemn powers, Madam.—Your Ladyship is, as I may say, a biter, Madam.

Mar. Upon my word 'tis very innocently, for I don't know what it is.

Pinch. Oh dear Madam, excuse me for that—no, no, bite, bite, Madam, that won't pass indeed.

Mar. Nay I must confess I take it to be something that is very entertaining, because I see it makes up a great part of the conversation among you fine gentlemen.

Pinch. Oh your only new way of humour.—We that pretend to be men of wit and pleasure do nothing but bite all day long.

Mar. But pray, Sir, as how? for example a little.

Pinch. Why as thus; suppose now I should say Sir *Simon Snuffie* was a wit.

Mar. A wit! he's a politician indeed, and a smart little gentleman; but for a wit—

Pinch. Bite! there 'tis now—Why he's no more a wit than I am a politician. Or now if I should say I am going to *Moscow*, or that I am to be Lord Mayor, or that the Cham of *Tartary*'s my cousin-german, that the Pope's a whig, and the *French* King a reformer, beauty to be abolish'd, and matrimony and ugly faces to prevail; How! say you with a grave face indeed: Bite, says I—that's all; you see it is the easiest thing in the world.

Scrib. Me-me-mighty easy, fe-fe-faith and troth.—Why this is nothing but lying—here I have been a biter, man and boy, these thirty years, and never knew it.

Mar. Well, I see you are a true biter, and a right wit of the age, by winding up your jest with matrimony—

mony—but have you been a sufferer by the ladies, that you speak so ill of their profession?

Pinch. Pardon me, not at all, Madam, only for the grace of wit, and to make up the troll of the sentence, as merrily conceited persons are us'd to do. I am matrimony's humble servant, came down to this very individual town of *Croydon* to pay my respects to it, and am to subscribe myself matrimony's bond-slave to-morrow.

Mar. And who is the nymph that is to be made happy?

Pinch. Happy! ha, ha, bite, Madam.—I am to be married indeed, but no body's to be made happy.

Mar. You are such a wag one does'nt know where to have you.—Well, but who is it that is to have the honour of being your bitten bride,—for bit she will be, that I foresee already.

Pinch. Right, Madam, for, as you say, I shall bite her, tho' she be bone of my bone never so much—you must know 'tis one Madam *Angelica*, daughter to Sir *Timothy Tallapoy*, a rich merchant hard by here.

Mar. Handsome to a miracle, I suppose.

Pinch. 'Egad I don't know, that's as the fates shall appoint—for you must know I never saw her nor her father in my life, nor heard of them till within these three days, when a comical old fellow, a father of mine in the country, sends a servant of his, one *Gregory Grumble* by name (whom, by the way, I bit seven times before he could tell how my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, my uncles and aunts, and the rest of my relations in the country did), to tell me that he had agreed with a gentleman for a wife for me.—I received the news, bit the bearer again, and then sent him to notify to my father-in-law that is to be.

Mar. And in consequence thereof you are come down hither?

Pinch. To bite the old gentleman and the rest of my *Croydonian* relations, consummate with his daughter, and beget a biting generation for the benefit of posterity.

Mar. aside to *Scrib.*] You see this is your man—before you don't lose sight of him.

Scrib. *Te-te-tace's* the word, Madam,—a word to the wife—I'll be-be-bite him, I warrant you.

Mar.

Mar. You're so intent upon this fair lady, that I'm afraid we must despair of your good company.

Pinch. For that fair lady you speak of, time enough—I'll marry her to-morrow time enough, I'll warrant you—I'll marry her—can she desire more?—But for you, Madam, I would forsake the greatest princess upon the earth, tho' she were fair as the blushing morn—or—

Mar. Oh dear! this is a very particular piece of gallantry,—but you men of wit and pleasure are so engaging—

Pinch. For really, Madam, since the first happy minute I had the honour to know you ———

Mar. Which was about two hours ago. [*Aside.*]

Pinch. I have really had the greatest inclination in the world to profess myself, Madam, your Ladyship's most profound humble servant.

Mar. Nay, I swear this is too much—I would not make your lady jealous for the world.

Pinch. Madam, shall I tell you, Ladyship without a bite, and by the solemn powers, I am passionate and sincere?

Mar. I have a strange inclination to take you at your word.

Pinch. Od! so do—here am I that will make it out.

Mar. Give me your hand—I'll have a good opinion of my beauty, and intrench upon your bride's prerogative; for this day I receive you for my servant, and if you don't like me when that's over, as well as you do now, you shall repair to your lady mistress at night, and be married to-morrow for your punishment.

Pinch. Od! I like this mightily—strangely—faith—Od! there's a good deal of conceit in it—it's like a carnival before *Lent*—or a—

Mar. Come hang similes—we'll join the rest of our company, and be as merry as the day's long.

Pinch. Or like—or hold—stay—or like a biting and a beating, or like laughing and crying, or like fair weather and foul, or like riding in a coach and going a-foot afterwards—or like——

Mar. Phoo! phoo!—Come along, I'll warrant you.

Pinch. Or like—od! I don't know—like somewhat that's very merry and very melancholy—but, as you say, hang similes, and so come along. [*Exeunt.*]

A SONG.

A SONG.

I.

CLOE blusht'd, and frown'd, and swore,
 And push'd me rudely from her.
 I call'd her perjur'd, faithless whore,
 To talk to me of honour.

II.

But when I rose and would be gone,
 She cried, nay, whither go ye?
 Young Damon saw; now we're alone,
 Do what you will with Cloe.

ACT II.

*Enter Sir Timothy Tallapoy, two or three Servants
 ridiculously habited hailing in Grumble.*

Sir Tim. **L**OOK ye, firrah, I will put you into the hands of the *Tutang*, which is, according to interpretation, the officer that delighteth in justice, which is, according to *English* expression, the constable of *Croydon*;—I'll see whether the laws of this land, as corrupt as they are, will allow you in enormities like these.

Grum. Yauft charge the constable wi' ma'—Yauft put me i' th' stocks now! master's worship, *Sir Peter Pinch's* worship, and my *Lady Pinch's* worship, and young maister *Pinch's* worship, the young *Squair's* worship, they'll take't hudge kaindly o' your worship to put their man i' th' stoucks for bracking the boble there.

Sir Tim. Profane rascal! firrah! It was the pagode, or representation of the great *Callasusu*, who was nephew to the great *Fillimaso*, who was descended from the illustrious *Fokienfi*, who was the first inventor of eating rice upon platters.—Sirrah! if you had been at *Nanquin*, or the great city of *Xamsi*, you had suffer'd death, firrah! death, you varlet!

Enter Angelica.

Ang. How now? What's the matter? What has this fellow done, that he is taken into custody?

L 6

Sir Tim.

Sir Tim. The pagode, the pagode, he has broken the great pagode.

Ang. Is that all?

Sir Tim. Get you in, huffy, incontinently I say:—You have not that regard and veneration for things which deserve regard and veneration, which any civilly, modestly, or virtuously dispos'd person may have, can have, must have, and ought to have, huffy.

Grum. Yauft mak such a raut and a hurly-burly, an' yau'ft no stay till young maister come—here—I'fe pay for't—I re pay for't aut of my awn pocket,—here bauy another. [*offering money.*] Here's a raut with a railax, and a xu, with a pox. [*Aside.*]

Sir Tim. Monster of a fellow!—Take him away from my sight—confine him in the lowest part of the edifice, ev'n in the cellar—away with him I say. [*Exeunt servants with Grumble.*] His master will be here to-day, and I will demand justice of him—I will demand two hundred and seventy odd blows on his belly, three hundred on his breech, and four hundred and twenty nine on the soles of his feet.—Well, mistress, have you dispos'd yourself incontinently to marry the Mandarin Mr. Pinch to-morrow, according to my commands?

Ang. To-morrow, Sir? to-morrow's very soon.

Sir Tim. By the majesty of *Pekin*, an' you mutter, huffy, I'll have you marry'd to-night, and then you'll be out of your pain by to-morrow.

Ang. Pain, Sir?—Upon my word, Sir, 'tis not the matter of the pain, Sir, nor the being out of the pain, that I stand upon; but upon my word, 'tis a very hard thing to be forced to marry a man one don't like

Sir Tim. Most provoking impertinence—to dislike a man before she sees him, only in opposition to my paternal authority.—No, huffy, I know the true reason—'tis not that you dislike him, but because you like somebody else;—you have set your heart upon some of those vain frothy young *Mandarins* of that imperial, but abominably vicious city of *London*, called beaux.

Ang. Upon my word, Sir.—

Sir Tim. Be silent, I say,—for ought I know you design to join yourself to one of that execrable new sect, which they call the biters, those sons of the serpent that inhabits in the house of smoke.—By the Great *Lama*, I had

had as soon see you married to the giant *Tanfu*, who inhabits in the prodigious mountains of *Tartary*, and eats an hundred and fifty virgins every day in the week, but *Fridays* and *Saturdays*, and then he lives upon old women, as good *Catholicks* do upon stock-fish, by way of mortification.

Ang. Well, Sir, you may do what you please with me, but I am sure you shall never make me forget poor *Mr. Friendly*.

Sir Tim. Ah ah! said I not so? Does it go there?

Ang. For his estate, 'tis as good as your *Mandarin Pinch's*; and for his personal qualifications, I'm sure I know 'em too well not to vindicate 'em against any *Mandarin* in christendom.—I do not know why I should not pluck up a spirit, and tell this old *Chinese* father of mine his own.

Sir Tim. Why hearken to me, my daughter; (I will reason with her) thou hast been bred up like a virtuous and a sober maiden, and would'st thou take the part of a profane wretch, who sold his stock out of the old *East-India* Company, and shew'd his scurrilous wit in making a jest of the worshipful traders? A scurvy, idle varlet! A wicked varlet!

Ang. Well, Sir, if he took his stock out of one fund that he was weary of, he'll put it into another that he likes better; and that's what all the young fellows about town do, that understand business.

Sir Tim. A wicked, wicked wretch—He might have put into the new then, if he did not like the old, —but to be of neither;—Talk no more of him—thou wilt put me into a chafe, and it will be the worse for thee. A naughty ill-principled young man, to be of neither *East-India* Company.

Ang. Well—but dear, dear father, will you make me marry this scurvy fellow I never saw?

Sir Tim. This is immoderately vexatious!—In good truth I am resolved.

Ang. Are you?—Why then so am I, and let the *Mandarin* look to't.

Sir Tim. What a prodigious thing is the education of an *English* damsel!

Ang. [*Aside*] How fantastical is the difference between

an

an old fellow's judgment, and a young wench's inclinations—Od! I have a good mind to speak out.

To Sir Tim.] I must marry him then, you say?

Sir Tim. Positively.

Ang. Well, I shall make——

Sir Tim. A good wife, I hope, gentlewoman.

Ang. No—but what's all one, to such a scurvy abominable, whimsical coxcomical, miserable, oddish, exemplary kind of a husband of him, that the most potent Cham of *Tartary*, that you us'd to tell us of so, shan't show his fellow, among all the merry men in his country—and so I am resolved I'll tell him the first time I see him.

[*Exit Angelica.*

Sir Tim. Well—Incontinently this is a most flagitious age—nothing but disobedience, impudence, debauchery, biting, and all kind of wickedness—but no matter;—I will comfort myself after the manner of the sage philosopher *Tychung*, who lived fifteen thousand seven hundred and fourteen years two months and three days ago, and let the world rub—I will send forthwith to my correspondent at *Canton* for a new pagode—I will marry my daughter to the young man I have provided for her—,—and after that I will incontinently espouse the most amiable *Mariana*, and engender a male offspring, who shall drink nothing but the divine liquor tea, and eat nothing but oriental rice, and be brought up after the institutions of the most excellent *Confucius*. And I will moreover in the mean time divert the melancholy faculties of my mind in beholding the diversions of this numerical *Croydon* fair—I will behold the most noble exercise of dancing on the ropes—I have beheld it with delight in the flourishing empire of *China*, I will behold it here again. But lo! here are of the frequenters of this place—they seem *Lipous*, or men of rank—I will salute them according to the manner of the most glorious and wise city of *Peking*,

Enter Pinch, and Scribblescrabble.

Sir Timothy salutes them after the Chinese manner.

Pinch. Come along, my little *Scribblescrabble*,—we shall find the ladies somewhere hereabouts—Hey! Who have we here! What, are you the man with the wax-works?

Scrib. By *Je-Je-Jerico*, *Sir Timothy Tallaboy*. [*Aside.*

Sir

Sir Tim. Young gentleman, may the garden of your graces be ever flourishing—but I delight not in wax-works.

Pinch. What then, the *vigo* plate.

Sir Tim. I am ignorant of your intentions.

Scrib. Hush! Squire, Squire Pinch! [Aside.

Pinch. Oh ho! What, you're the man that bought the right *Italian* fairy that was born at *Hampstead*?

Sir Tim. I am a *Mandarin* of this neighbourhood, and delight in a new mansion.

Scrib. A wo-word w'ye. [Aside to Pinch.

Pinch. Oh pox! that's just at the town's end, with bottled ale and collard beef over the door; the *Sussex* house.

Scrib. Are you me-me-mad!—Come away, I tell you—this is a poor unfortunate gentleman that's craz'd—He was mace-bearer to the Lord Chancellor of *Moscow*, and was turn'd out of his place for having more wit than his master—poor man, happened not to be dull enough to be in with that ministry, lost his place, hurt his head, poor man?

Pinch. Very strange, faith! Odd, I'll bite him—I never bit a mad-man in my life.

Scrib. Poo, poo!—Come away.

Pinch. By the solemn powers I will—Old gentleman, your servant.

Sir Tim. Most flourishing youth, I congratulate your arriva at the village of *Croydon*—Come you from the Imperial city of *London*?

Pinch. Yes, yes, we came from *London*.

Sir Tim. And do the most ingenious imparters of novelty afford any thing that is new?

Pinch. There's comical news, faith, in the *flying post*—'Tis given out and rumour'd that several great men, and *Beglerbegs* in the *West-Indies*, have declared for the rebels in *Hungary*.

Sir Tim. Sir, shall I tell you? I am not concerned for any transactions which are or may be in the *West-Indies*.—Sir, you are a stranger to me, but I deal plainly with you, I am no friend to any thing in the *West*, and am positively resolv'd, Sir, never to have any thing to do with *Westminster*, *West-Chester*, *West-Smithfield*, or the *West-Indies*. No, Sir, the *East*, I think, is more properly

properly the concern of every good and honest man.— You take my meaning, Sir; and if you have any thing from the *East-Indies*, so, Sir, for to tell you my mind freely, I don't think there is a good moral man on this side the Cape of *Good Hope*.

Scrib. By *Je-Je-Jericho*, that's much!

Sir Tim. Always excepting some of the worshipful traders to the aforesaid *East-Indies*.

Pinch. Why, Sir, both the companies are concern'd in the project, and are to furnish——

Sir Tim. Sir, let me tell you, they are a wise and a prudent——

Pinch. Bite! bite! my dear.

Sir Tim. How, Sir? why? where? what? meaning whom?

[*Staring.*]

Pinch. What? why bite, old gentleman, that's all, bite!

Scrib. Good lack! how he looks! de-de-dear Squire, come away.

Sir Tim. 'Tis all false! 'tis impossible! 'tis not in nature! Sir, you're a son of a bitch.—Sir, I am a *Mandarin* of the Tribunal of Justice.—I am a trader to the most excellent oriental countries—I never was bit in my life, nor ever will be bit, that's more, by the majesty of *Peking*.

Scrib. Dear Squire, have a care, that's a very hard stick in his hand.

Pinch. Let me alone, you shall see I'll fun him—I'll fun him, I warrant you.—Come old gentleman, [*To Sir Timothy.*] no harm, only a little merriment—I give a bite, and I take a bite—bite me again,

Sir Tim. I would as soon commit felony or treason—I thank a good conscience, and a virtuous education, I am none of those: go, Sir, whoever you are, you're an idle young man—and your parents—But I say no more! I would not have any child of mine come near you—for oh dear——

[*Lifting up his hands.*]

Pinch. This is foolish enough, faith! this old fellow is very hellish and very stupid.—What an' I warrant you you take us biters to be sad dogs?

Sir Tim. By the majesty of *Peking*, and so I do—I take you to be worse than popery, slavery, presbytery, rebellion, plague, fire, famine, and a standing army to boot.

boot.—What a condition is this poor nation in! What with plotters in one place, and biters in another, and yet no body's hang'd for either.

Pinch. What strange enemies these old fools are to us wits.—Well! 'tis a wonderful thing in nature, but certainly there is such a thing as sympathy and antipathy.

Sir Tim. I have, I thank my stars, seen governments where immoralities of this kind were death, death by the law.—There are princes!—The king of *Tunquin* and emperor of *Japan*, and the serene *Cham*! I would fain see a man pretend to bite in their Courts,

Pinch. Say you me so? Od! would I were well there—I and a knot of wags that I know.

Sir Tim. And what would'st thou do before their glorious thrones?—why they'd hang thee, hang thee up, thou wretched puppy!

Pinch. Would they say so, old boy! Come, I'll tell thee what, that's fair,—I'll hold thee an even wager that I bite the *Cham* of *Tartary*, his royal relations, his most honourable Privy Council, and all his Ministers, from his Lord-keeper to his Corn-cutter, within the space of one year and six months from the day of the date of these presents.

Sir Tim. What, his present Majesty?

Pinch. Yea verily.

Sir Tim. The *Cham* that now reigneth?

Pinch. *Cham* or *Keyfar*, all one to *Peter*, i'faith.

Sir Tim. You lye, and you're a rascal.

[*Beating him round the stage.*]

Pinch. Pshaw! nay! pooh! what's this for!—what I suppose if a man pays scot and lot—pray, Sir, hold, Sir.

Sir Tim. I'll bite you, you dog! Bite, quotha!—And are you a biter too, firrah? [*To Scribblecrabble.*]

Scrib. No, no, no, as I hope to live—I am a civil peaceable man, and a City Solicitor.

Sir Tim. I shall put you in mind once more of his Majesty of *China*.

[*Beating him again.*]

Pinch. 'Tis very well! very well indeed! If a man may not be a little harmlessly witty—why, Mr. *Scribblecrabble*, help! murder! help!

Enter Clerimont, he interposes.

Cler. How! Mr. *Pinch* suffering under my uncle!—Pray, Sir, hold your hand.

Sir

Sir Tim. Art thou there, varlet! thou enemy to *East-India* Companies! thou villain thou!

Cler. Pray, Sir, be pacified.

Sir Tim. Sirrah! I will never be pacified—I thought this was one of thy wicked companions—but I'll be reveng'd of you all—I will so.—Bite the *Cham* of *Tartary*.

[*Exit Sir Tim.*]

Scrib. Mr. *Clerimont*, here has been a dreadful *ca-catastrophe*; but harkye, the Squire and your uncle didn't know one another.

Cler. That was lucky indeed! Enough! [*Aside.* What lucky accident was this! Well I profess I am very sorry for it. Oh he's a mad old fellow—I wish he han't hurt your ingenuity—I swear he has batter'd the outside of it most abominably.

Pinch. He has broke all my head here, only for a word speaking. [*Half crying.* As I hope to live, I meant no more harm!—And he has all blooded my neckcloth here—I don't know what to do, not I.

Scrib. The Squire wouldn't be persuaded, he would bite him, and so the *me-matter* happened.

Cler. See, here are the ladies.—Come, courage—'twas a misfortune your wit brought upon you, and so the better to be endur'd.

Enter Friendly, Mariana, and Stale.

Pinch. I'd ha' given a hundred pounds out of my pocket, this scurvy business hadn't happen'd.

Mar. What, d'ye turn away from me? Unkind Mr. *Pinch*!

Pinch. A little out of order, Madam, that's all—

Cler. Oh, he has had a misfortune.

Mar. You fright me to death! the matter?

Cler. Only a rencounter, a drubbing or so! Hark, I'll tell you—— [*Whisper.*

Pinch. Dear Mr. *Scribblescrabble*, look in my face—How do I look? sadly! ha!

Scrib. Truly that blow upon your forehead has discompos'd your physiognomy strangely.

Pinch. What, ruful! dismal!

Scrib. But step aside here, and we'll get some water and a patch, and furbish up your countenance again as well as ever.

Pinch

Pinch. Will you be so kind ? I shall acknowledge the favour the longest day I have to live.

[*Exeunt Pinch and Scribblecrabble.*]

Mar. Thus it happens between too much wit and too little valour.

Friend. The poor corps indeed has a damn'd time on't that's match'd with a pert understanding, and frequently for keeping bad company.

Stale. Well, for my part I have deduc'd it from a long concatenation of observations, that nothing but such extravagant accidents attend upon the conversations of those impertinents they call wits—*Mr. Friendly*, I will beg one thing of you—not that I pretend to any influence ; but people in my circumstances do commonly ask one thing,—my circumstances ? *Eh ! min Cœur ?* what indiscretion ! my dear, you'll pardon me ?

Mar. Oh dear Madam, why this reserve among friends ? You know *Mr. Clerimont* and I are of your party—Come, out with your request.—All you lovers have some little fond request or other to make before matrimony.

Cler. Yes, yes, as not to chew tobacco, to shift in your own dressing-room—to have a convenience apart, or—

Mar. O filthy ! O abominable ! no, no, none of these—but whatever it be, I'll engage *Mr. Friendly* will make it good.

Friend. Your most obedient humble servant,

Stale. Well, *Mr. Friendly*, 'tis only this : That for my sake you wou'd never bite any person, of any sex, age, or condition in the world ; but that, above all, you wou'd forbear your devoted and most engaged friend and servant.

Friend. Forbear you, dear Madam ? the most reasonable request that was ever made in the world.

Stale. Not that I would have you misunderstand me neither, dear *Mr. Friendly*.

Friendly. If any presumption of mine has given your Ladyship occasion to think——

Stale. Oh fie ? no, *Mr. Friendly*,

Friend. I do here solemnly swear and declare, in the face of the world, that from the day of the date of these presents

presents I will most sincerely refrain, abstain, and forbear——

Stale. Pish! why this is'n't it, this is't what I mean, this is'n't what I'd be at.

Friend. From any matter or thing whatsoever that has the honour, in any manner, to appertain or belong to your Ladyship.

Mar. Was ever any thing so insufferably ill-natur'd to mistake a poor woman so awkwardly, and turn her plain meaning so quite contrary to her inclination.

Cler. But if it passes so, I am mistaken.

Stale. Why I tell you, and tell you again, you take me wrong, Mr. *Friendly*,

Friend. Madam, I wou'dn't presume to take you at all——

Stale. Shoo! how foolish this is in you, Mr. *Friendly*! this raillery is very *mal à propos*, Mr. *Friendly*.—I'll vow, if you persist in it, Mr. *Friendly*, you'll make me extremely angry with you.

Mar. Dear Madam, what's the matter?

Stale. A foolish *double entendre*, my dear.

Mar. You're discompos'd.

Stale. I'm always so with a *double entendre*; a *double entendre* always discomposes me, especially when they will mean it in the wrong way, in spite of all one does to take it the right.

Mar. Nay, then there's something in it indeed—Mr. *Clerimont*, come, you must join with me—We'll do Mr. *Friendly* a good office in spite of his teeth; this must come to an *eclaircissement*, it may grow to a quarrel else.

Stale. No, my dear, there's no fear of that, I hope—Let me smell to your *Hungary-water* a little, Mr. *Friendly*.

Cler. Kind creature! what a look was there! what a smile!

Friend. What a grin! like a wooden cut of *Scoggan* before a jest-book.

Cler. Oh brute! go to the lady for shame.

Friend. Madam, you know my forbearance was only a mark of my respect— [Going towards her.]

Stale. Ah? you men!—well, I say no more—why would you put me in this chafe—you know how it is with

with me always— —I warrant you my poor head will suffer for it this two days—feel how it burns—

Mar. Was there ever such a nauseous five and fifty fondling !—but how do I know but age and folly may make ne such a monster ?

Cler. Never, 'tis impossible.

Mar. How, *Clerimont* ! shall I never grow old !

Cler. Certainly, if you live—but surely the wit and tenderness of my *Mariana* can never degenerate to the folly and fondness of such an idiot——To me, you must be always as you are, thus dear, thus agreeable, the constant object of my love.

Mar. Oh fie, fie ! a married man and talk of love ! to his own wife too !—they'll hear you, and laugh at us in their turn, if you han't a care.

Stale. But do you say you'll put me out of my pain by to-morrow morning ? 'Tis extremely kind.

Friend. I have given you my word, and you may depend upon it,

Stale. The expedition of your performance will make amends for every thing——'Tis excessively kind.

Friend. Hush, not a word more—*Mariana* and *Clerimont* will find matter of mirth out of it, and turn our happiness into ridicule.

Mar. See here's sweet Mr. *Pinch* again, as gay as if this mishap had never befallen him, and there was no such wicked thing as a cudgel in nature.

Enter Pinch and Scribblecrabble.

Pinch. Madam, your most humble servant. A scurvy kind of foolish business happen'd to happen just now here a little odly, Madam, but no great matter, Madam, 'tis all over now.

Mar. I am very glad to see you look so well after it—I'll swear I think you'r improv'd——That patch has given a very agreeable turn to his face—Your opinion, gentlemen.

Cler. The patch does its part, upon my word—a little o'th'biggest, or so—but else wonderfully well.

Friend. And are you as sound within, as without, Sir ?

Pinch. Oh to all intents and purposes.

Friend. And d'ye think you could bite as well as ever ?

Pinch.

Pinch. Ask my little *Scribblecrabble* else—didn't I bite your cousin, as she was dressing my head?

Scrib. None of my cousin, Squire.

Pinch. Nay, nay, she call'd you cousin; a fat comely gentlemwoman hard by here, at the sign of the *Adam* and *Eve*, that sells sausages and black-puddings.

Scrib. She's none of my cousin. She's only my *Doll's* cousin.

Pinch. Why, the woman's a good woman—What are you ashamed of your kindred?

Scrib. She's none of my cousin. [Angrily.]

Mar. Ridiculous, we shall have 'em quarrel presently.

Cler. Come, come, no matter whose cousin she is.

Friend. You bit her, you say?

Pinch. Bit her; ay marry did I—and so I should have served all her family, and all her generation, if they had been here—What, ha'nt I been at *Moscow*, *Ispahan*, *Babylon*, and so forth? Knock him down!

Scrib. What did he say she was my cousin for? [Grumbling.]

Mar. To set aside this foolish dispute, pray shew me the biting song, which you said was set to music.

Pinch. Here it is, and it is in the nature of a dialogue, and if your Ladyship will do me the honour to bear a bob with me, as I may so say, we'll perform it before all the company.

Mar. To oblige you, Sir, I'll do my best.

A DIALOGUE.

Thyrsis **I** *IRIS, I have long, in vain,
Been your slave, and wore your clog;
'Tis but just I shou'd complain.
Since you use me like a dog.*

Iris *Faithful lovers are but few;
Could I trust, I would trust you:
Of all your sex I am afraid,
And therefore vow to die a maid.*

Thyrsis *Die a maid! so young, so pretty!
I'll be true, by all that's good:
Die a maid! I'll swear 'tis pity.*

Iris

Iris *Bite!* Thyrsis, *did you think I would?*

*But since you will be mine alone,
Here kiss the book and swear:
The wedding ring shall make us one.*

Thyrsis. *Bite!* Iris, *now I think all's fair.*

Chorus. *Bite!* Thyrsis, *now I think all's fair,
And well we may agree.
Since thus we love upon the square,
And Biters both are we.*

Cler. Rarely perform'd upon my word—Mr. Pinch has his gifts—what say you, Mr. Scribblescrabble?

Scrib. Mighty well indeed, Sir,—the Squire is a fine gentleman, that's the truth on't—but let him be never so well versed in the arts and sciences, he ought not to reflect upon the family of the Scribblescrabbles.

Cler. Oh no more of that——

Scrib. What if I did marry Mrs. Dorothy Pattypan, the pastry-cook's daughter, I didn't marry all her scoundrel consanguinity, I hope; no, I disdain 'em, I make her and them to know themselves, I keep 'em under, I—

Enter Bandileer drunk, and Mrs. Scribblescrabble.

Mrs. Scrib. Nay, dear cousin Barnaby, where would you haul one—I'll swear I have eat so much goose, and drank so much sack, that I am almost in a Quandary—hiccup—good lack! now I have got the hiccoks; well, I won't drink a drop more, profess now.

Band. Look ye, take no care of that, I carry you to a friend of mine, dy'e see, and there we'll have a cup of rare Juniper, cure your hiccup, I warrant you—nothing but a cold stomach, cousin.

Stale. In the name of astonishment, what may these be, child?

Mar. Ha! as I live, Mrs. Dorothy Scribblescrabble in her own proper person.

Stale. Why, not our little man of law's consort?

Mar. The very self-same, as I'm virtuous—she's half boufy too—oh rueful!

Band. Dear cousin, let me buss you—I love you mightily.

[*Kisses her.*
Mrs.

Mrs. *Scrib.* O gemini!—hiccup—What makes you so rude—hiccup—don't ye see all the gentry here—for shame—hiccup—if our little *Simon* should hear of this now—hiccup.

Scrib. Ha! how! mercy upon me! what's this I see!

[Turning about and seeing his wife.

Mar. Now for the *Denouement* of the piece.

Mrs. *Scrib.* Oh law!—I am ruinated and undone—there is my own husband.

Scrib. Is your name *Dorothy*? ha!—answer me that.

Mrs. *Scrib.* Yes—hiccup.

Scrib. What is the reason that you set at nought my superiority and authority, and de-de-dare to come hither without my leave? Answer me quickly—come! what say ha?—

Mrs. *Scrib.* Nay, dear *Simmy*, don't be angry. I only came to—hiccup—bear my cousin *Bandileer* company—I wou'dn't, for all the varfal world, have come, hiccup—but that you know I love sack—hiccup—and walnuts mightily—hiccup.

Scrib. Cuc-cu-cousin me no cousin.—Who am I? Answer me quickly—Who am I? ha!

Band. Look ye, I'll stand by my cousin, she's my own cousin, tho' I am but a private gentleman soldier, whereof what argues that—my name's *Barnaby Bandileer*.

Mrs. *Scrib.* Well, well, I know who you are well enough, you are my hony—hiccup—but 'tis very hard if one must not—hiccup—or go a little abroad with a—hiccup—relation, or so—hiccup.

Scrib. Go! you're a quean.

Mar. O fy, Mr. *Scribblescrabble*! what! this to the wife of your bosom!

Scrib. You're a carrion! I'm enrag'd! and chastisement will ensue.

Stale. How! you little brutal you—My dear, my dear, (*To Mariana.*) for the honour of the sex let us never suffer the poor woman to be insulted before our faces—sure any two of our gender are sufficient, or of the *quorum*, as they say to keep a husband in order.

Mrs. *Scrib.* Ah dear ladies, 'tis your—hiccup—goodness—but 'tis an unknown thing, the life that I—hiccup—lead with him every day.

Mar.

Mar. Look ye if she doesn't weep, poor tender-hearted creature!—Come, for my sake, you must not make a quarrel of it—what? 'twas but an innocent frolic.

Scrib. Ha! I don't love frolics——

Mrs. Scrib. *Simmy*, dear *Simmy*, don't tofs and fling, and—hiccup—and ding up and down so—you'll break my heart—hiccup—

Scrib. Go thou fe-fe-fe-fe-fe-false *Dorothy*—elope, begone—go to your galant, go—

Mrs. Scrib. Oh law!—hiccup—this is very bitter. (*sobbing and crying.*) I have had seven children, besides four miscarriages, and very hard times of 'em all, by him, and to be us'd thus—this is very hard.

Band. Look ye, gentlemen, I don't well know what to make of all this—I am amaz'd or so, 'tis true—but she's my own cousin—I lodge in *Vinegar-Yard*—every body knows me—I only came for the diversion of an interlude, or so—do you know any thing of this matter, Sir? [To Pinch.

Pinch. Foolish enough, faith—why really I don't know what to say to these odd kind of circumstances; but pray may I crave your name, Sir?

Band. Sir, my name's *Barnaby*.

Pinch. Your Christen name, I mean.

Band. Oh, Sir, your servant, Sir; *Bandileer*, Sir.

Pinch. What, is *Bandileer* your Christen name?

Band. Sir, I don't know what you mean; but I'm half seas over——

Pinch. Very merry upon my word, [Mr. *Bandileer*'s woful drunk] (*afide.*) Oh you're very sober—you've hardly wet your lips to-day.

Band. Say you so, Sir?

Pinch. Bite.

Band. How's that, Sir? Hey day! what d'ye get behind me?—Look ye, gentlemen, I take you to be my friends.

Pinch. Knock him down.

[*Standing behind Band. and making a very great noise.*

Band. How, Sir? Dam ye, Sir, that won't pass neither, Sir.

Friend. Oh no harm, no harm, good Mr. *Bandileer*, you must not be angry—the gentleman means only mer-

riment——he's an arch wag, if you did but know him.

Band. Look ye, gentlemen, if that be all, the gentleman is a stranger to me, and perhaps I may be a stranger to him; but however I'll venture a tester or two at all-fours with him, if he's so far forth disposed.

Mrs. Scrib. Look, if you han't chaff up and down 'till you sweat like a bull——come; wipe your own dear sour frowzy face with your own *Doll's* handkerchief——hiccup——

Scrib. Aa!——did I think you would ha' serv'd me so——go——you're a hiccuping beast——I've a good mind to send you home to the family of the *Patipans*, I have so, you en-n-n-normous cockatrice.

Band. Look ye I brought my cousin out——I took her up, as they say, and so, d'ye see, I'll set her down again.

Cler. These fools begin to be troublesome, we must get rid of 'em.——Ha! here's *Clever* too come with intelligence from my uncle,

Enter Mrs. Clever.

I see there's success in your face, I dare swear the design thrives.

Clev. Admirably——the plot is just as that in a critick's play, the parts are all ready, and we are to begin within this half hour; but I hold it convenient to disperse this impertinent audience first, that we may rehearse in private.

Mar. You have no farther occasion for my biting lover?

Clev. He may dispose of his person how he pleases——we shall hardly find him of any further consequence.

Mar. I'll pin him to Madam *Scribblescrabble* and her bouffy galant, and turn 'em adrift together.——But what shall we do with my dear friend *Stale*?

Clev. Let me alone with her. Engage Mr. *Friendly* to tip off with the first opportunity, and leave the rest to my management.

[To Clerimont.]

Cler. You won't be so unmerciful to turn her loose after him?

Clev. I must confess, running away is not the best proof a young fellow can give of his courage, but for the present occasion tell him 'tis necessary for the swain

to fly, and the nymph to pursue——Let him leave word with his man where we may hear of him.

Mar. Well, I vow, Mr. *Pinch*, you'll engage me extremely by this piece of service. [*To Pinch aside.*—this little impertinent lawyer has a bus'ness of consequence to look after for me here in town, and this unfortunate affair of his wife does so exasperate his choler, that he'll not think of it 'till we get her out of the way.

Pinch. Where shall I attend your Ladyship?

Mar. Any where here in town.

Pinch. At the *Greyhound*!

Mar. As proper as any, where we'll be all with you immediately, and divert ourselves at the expence of the family of the *Scribblescrabbles*.

Pinch. We'll laugh immoderately—Does your Ladyship know what fun is?

Mar. No——but it's no matter for that.

Pinch. No, as you say, Madam, its no matter for that; but I'll shew you such sport, such fun,—I'll bite Mr. *Bandileer*.—Look ye, Mr. *Scribblescrabble*, we'll have no more words of this matter, your lady is a virtuous person, and a good wife, she has born you many children, but we have all our failings.

Scrib. Ah!—name her not, dear Squire—

Mar. Mr. *Scribblescrabble*, let me advise you in this adventure—I have engaged Mr. *Pinch* to serve you in it—— [*To Scribblescrabble aside.* You may trust your wife with him, and all will be well.

Scrib. Ah de-de-dear Madam, the Squire's a gentleman—it wouldn't grieve one to trust ones wife with a gentleman.

Mar. They're but just going hard by, we'll follow 'em presently!

Scrib. Squire, dear Squire, have an eye to *Be- Be- Be-Barnaby Bandileer*: My heart misgives me plaguily.

[*Aside to Pinch.*

Pinch. Bite! d'ye think I don't know what to do? trouble not yourself.—Mr. *Bandileer*'s very much in drink——but no matter for that, he'll bite so much the better——hum—hum—you were a saying, Sir, [*To Bandileer.*] your name was *Barnaby*.

Band. Yes, Sir; no offence, I hope.

Pinch. Oh none at all, so much the better; I love *Barnaby* of all names, I was born on a *Barnaby-bright* in the morning, I have seen you somewhere or other for certain.

Band. I use the *Cat and Fiddle*, most an end, Sir.

Pinch. In *Drury-lane*? Ay there it was, if I am not mightily mistaken, I have bit a corporal that belong'd to your company a very merry fellow, but I have forgot his name.

Band. *Kit Kunnyborrow* belike.

Pinch. The very same——Look ye, you and I, and ——Hark ye, Madam, [*To Mrs. Scribble*]. *Scribble*. You and I, and your cousin here, we'll steal off and have one healing quart of walnuts and sack at the *Grey-bound*.

[*Whilst Clever entertains my Lady Stale, Friendly steals of.*]

Band. I must needs say you're a very civil gentleman, Sir, and if you'll so far demeanor yourself, Sir, —Look ye, Sir, if my cousin be willing——I came with my cousin, Sir, and I'll go with my cousin, Sir, I'll stand and fall with my cousin, Sir.

Mrs. Scrib. I'm sure you behave yourself so like a gentleman—that—hiccup—But if my *Simon* should take a new vagary—oh dear—hiccup—

Pinch. Oh never fear that—the ladies have undertaken to bamboozle him—they'll make him know his duty, and beg your pardon—now! now take your time and steal off—take care of your cousin, Mr. *Bandileer*.

Mrs. Scrib. Oh dear, my hiccocks is very bad.

Band. Look ye, I'll stand and fall that's my word.

[*Exeunt Pinch, Bandileer, and Mrs. Scribble.*]

Scrib. How! ha! what! Gone again!——Squire, Squire.

Mar. Hush! be quiet, come hither.

Scrib. Squire, dear Squire, have a care of *Be-Be-Barnaby*.

Mar. Did'nt I tell you this was the only way to get rid of your wife's relation?

Scrib. I acquiesce, Madam, I acquiesce.

Clev. Have a little patience, Madam, and I'll set every thing in order. [*Adjusting Lady Stale's head.*]

I know

I know your Ladyship uses to be the nicest creature in the world in these matters—in the name of wonder, who could it be that dress'd you to-day?

Stale. Oh I couldn't bear any awkward body's fits about me—I can't tolerate any thing but my own woman——don't you know my woman!

Clew. Oh dear, yes, Madam, Mrs. *Fiddlefaddle*.

Stale. 'Tis the carefullest creature; she has liv'd with me ever since the Restoration, and never administer'd a wrong thing to me, or stuck a pin amiss, in all the time.

Clew. The Restoration! That's a long time indeed. Your Ladyship's maid-servants, I believe, are much more constant than your men.

Stale. The Restoration did I say? the Restoration? My memory! what a thing is my memory! I meant your other public business that has happen'd here.

Clew. The Revolution?

Stale. Ay, that, that—I take so little notice of your public news!—But, as I was saying, she's the heedfullest person in any thing that relates to my person.

Clew. I wonder she should put so little powder in your hair; I swear one might see it look quite gray.—Indeed that was a fault in Mrs. *Fiddlefaddle*.

Stale. Hush! dear *Clever*, I wouldn't have *Friendly* hear you for all the world.

Clew. Oh no danger.

Stale. Not but that mine was a meer misfortune—The *Irish* fright at that same revolution put me into fits, and frighted my poor hair gray all o' the sudden. Besides, *Mariana* here knows my relations, we are all gray ten years sooner than other people. I come of a gray family; don't I, my dear? But then I would not have Mr. *Friendly* for many reasons think me in years, I know he designs having an heir to his family, and—

Mar. But, dear Madam, why do you put yourself in pain for his hearing us? I thought he had left the company by your order.

Stale. How left! whom child? What, is Mr. *Friendly* gone!

Clew. Gone! didn't you see him? I'll swear I thought you had put him upon that pleasant piece of galantry.

Stale. Galantry! oh perfidious! can it be possible!

dear *Clever* explain yourself, or I'll vow you'll put me into the hysteriques.

Clew. Nay indeed I thought it look'd a little odd for Mr. *Friendly* to abandon a lady in your Ladyship's circumstances, for a couple of the trapishest creatures I ever saw in masks, so miserably rigg'd, with dy'd linings and tatter'd furbelows.

Stale. The little nasty inconsiderable huffies! but, dear child, tell me, did he seem fond?

Mar. Very good! now for my share of the lye. [*aside.* Excessively loving; nay, they were but too well acquainted, that's certain—I heard 'em call him by his name—Are not you a dear dog, says one of 'em; What my little *Jenny*, quo' he! and immediately whipp'd one arm about one, and t'other about t'other, and away they scuttled together so familiarly I warrant you.

Stale. Which way are they gone?

Mar. That way, Madam; but it may be nothing but an innocent frolic.

Stale. A frolic, my dear? Ah, the devil take such frolics, I say. You don't know what a concern I am in; he has put me off, with a pretence of his catching misfortunes (as he calls them) by these common sluts, these twenty times already; and if he should catch another misfortune we cannot be married till he's well again, and that will be a month, or three weeks at least; besides surgeons are so unskilful, and such knaves, and I am so fearful of those matters myself—Well dear, my dears, forgive me. [*Exit Lady Stale.*

Mar. Oh by all means, my dear.—Ha, ha, ha! —What a terrible fright my dear friend was in, under the apprehension of a disappointment.

Clew. I must own I have ill-nature enough to rejoice exceedingly at her Ladyship's vexation; she has been a standing incumbrance upon poor *Friendly*'s pleasures for these two years, she has watch'd him with as much jealousy and perverseness as a barren wife.

Cler. And has been as uneasy to him as a barren wife's mother, and as provoking every way.—But let her be forgotten, as she ought to be, and think of your own matters—I have just now left your uncle.

Mar. Very much in love, I hope.

Cler. That is, just as much a fool as you found him,
Clew.

Clev. To a tittle; he's stark mad; love and *Peking*, that is, your Ladyship and the Emperor of *China*, have turn'd his brains—he has made a *Chinese* song upon you, and I left him singing it to an oriental kettle-drum, as he calls it. Next to the great *Cham* and *Mariana*, I believe I have an interest in him.

Mar. I suppose you have been promising largely in my name, what I am never to perform.

Clev. Nay, that depends upon you; a little love, child, that's all.

Mar. Well, he shall have all I can spare.

Clev. And I dare swear that's more than enough for his oriental occasions.

Clev. But I suppose you dealt with him as in the way of trade—what return for all this?

Clev. The return that an old man usually makes.

Mar. Ay marry, and what's that?

Clev. To do all he can for you—and no more.

Clev. Very fair, I think.

Mar. I'll put him to it, I promise you.

Clev. I told him you had resolv'd upon parting with some of your fortune to a poor relation of yours, and that you requir'd him to join with you in that settlement as a mark of his love, without further enquiry, and then you would be his as far as possible.

Clev. Well, and what answer to that?

Clev. Oh he was all rapture! consented to it, and swore immediately by half a dozen *Chinese* saints, with devilish hard names, that he wish'd he could make your relation Viceroy of *Eastern Tartary*.

Mar. Oh my relation shall thank him; I wish he may be as fond of him, when they come to be better acquainted.

Clev. That I doubt of.

Clev. He expects you immediately; as we go I'll instruct Mr. *Clevimont* how to dispose of himself.—— Are your deeds ready?

Clev. Have you done as you were ordered in that matter, Mr. *Scribblescrabble*?

Scrib. Yes, Sir, the deeds are ready. [*Sighing.*]

Clev. The deeds are ready!——What doleful voice is that? Can that be Mr. *Scribblescrabble*? Is it possible the gay, the witty, the galant Mr. *Scribblescrabble*?

Scrib. Ah good lack; my *De-De-Dell's* false—perhaps you don't know that.

Clev. False is that all? A trifle—be false again, be as false to her as she can be to you for the life of her—give her as good as she brings.

Mar. Nay, I told him 'twas below the character of a fine gentleman, and a man of the town, as he is, to discompose his noble soul for any thing a wife can do or say.

Cler. No, no, he has forgot it, or will do it in a very little while longer.——Indifference is the word, and *Madam Scribblefcrabble* may dispose of her person as she thinks fit.

Scrib. Nay, I hadn't so much car'd for it, hadn't it been for that son of a whore, that *Be-Be-Barnaby Raxdileer*.

Clev. Care for it! —Nay, if you once come to care for your wife, farewell galantry,——why you will be company for no body but haberdashers, tin-men, trunk-makers, and such comical kind of people.

Scrib. Nay, I always had a spirit above these pe-pe-paultry matters too——I de-de-don't know how I came to marry the jade, unless it were for form's sake, or out of cu-cu-custom, as they say.

Mar. No!——And though you fancy you are vex'd at her now, I fancy 'tis only for form's sake, and out of custom, as you say——come, come along with us, and think of the hundred guineas you're to get of Mr. *Friendly*——Why 'twill buy you Claret and mirth enough to make you actually believe you are a widower.

[*Exeunt.*]

A S O N G.

I.

SILLY swain, give o'er thy wooing,
Sighing, gazing, kissing, cooing,
All is very foolish doing.

II.

All that follows after kisses,
The very best, the bliss of blisses,
Is as dull a joy as this is.

Prove

III.

*Prove the nymph, and taste her treasure,
Tell me then when full of pleasure,
What dull thing thou can'st discover,
Duller than a happy lover.*

Silly swain, give o'er, &c.

A C T III.

SCENE, *Sir Timothy Tallapoy's house.*

Enter Angelica, Mariana, and Mrs. Clever.

Ang. WELL, Madam, don't you think my father now one of the strangest old gentlemen that ever you saw with your eyes? Oh gemini! I would not marry such a strange sort of an old fellow for all the world.

Clev. No, nor she neither, child, notwithstanding all the violent protestations of good-will she made him but now.

Mar. I swear I think there is something very agreeable and entertaining in Sir *Timothy's* humour.

Clev. Nay, indeed, all the ill that you can say of him is, that he's an old man, and for my part I think all old men are alike.

Ang. Oh dear, in what, Madam?

Clev. In being good for nothing, Madam.

Ang. Oh dear! I don't think so. I fancy I could like some sort of old men strangely, they're so civil and complaisant, and so neat, and so clean, and shav'd so close, I warrant ye.

Mar. Should you like Mr. *Friendly* if he were old, Madam?

Ang. As for Mr. *Friendly* indeed, Madam, he's a kind of a perfect stranger to me, so that I don't know what judgment to make of his temper or inclinations; he may be a very good sort of a man for ought I know, not but that I can't help thinking Mr. *Friendly* has some humours may make a woman very uneasy, when she is—

Clev. Not so absolute a stranger to him as you are:
(*smiling.*) Are not you a little hypocrite? Hark ye;

[*Hitting her with her fan.*]

Do you intend to be married to-night to a man that you are such an absolute stranger to?

Ang. Oh la! I wonder what makes you talk so—
who could put such a thing into your head?

Clev. He that put it into yours, *Friendly.*

Ang. I'll swear he gives himself a strange liberty of talking.

Mar. None but what you'll forgive him for, I dare swear.

Clev. He fancied, if he didn't tell, you would.

Ang. Well, I wonder at his confidence.

Mar. For being before hand with you. Really love-matters are come to be manag'd after a very fantastical manner, and all the care is now, not who shall keep the secret best, but who shall tell first.

Ang. I'll vow I have a good mind not to have him, he's such a meer blab.

Mar. That would be all wrong, as they say, Madam, to fall out with him, and be reveng'd upon yourself.

Clev. She'll consider better of it, never fear.

Mar. Well, but dear Madam, we are of your party, and I hope you take us to be so much your friends as to deserve your confidence——You know we have no other design upon Sir *Timothy*, but in order to bring this business, between Mr. *Friendly* and you, to a happy conclusion.

Ang. Nay, really, I must needs say I have been infinitely obliged to you, dear Madam——and indeed my father is such a strange kind of a man, that I don't care what risque I run to get out of his clutches. Well, but you know Mr. *Friendly*, Madam. [To Mariana.]

Mar. A little Madam, not so well as you do, I fancy.

Ang. Oh dear, yes to be sure you do, and a great deal better too; but do you think he'll make a good husband? I believe he's a strange wild young fellow; really a woman runs a strange hazard with these wild young fellows.

Mar. All gamesters that play deep, and push for a fortune, run hazards, and for my part I am always for risking with a wild fellow rather than a tame one——
besides

besides, were he never so wild, matrimony will make him bate of his speed, as they say that have tried it.

Ang. I'll vow I've heard he drinks a world of claret.

Clev. And you fancy that will make him so sleepy—

Ang. If I don't wonder what you can mean by that—Well, Mrs. *Clever*, you are the maliciouslest creature, you are always teasing one; but I am resolv'd I'll be reveng'd of you at night, when we are a-bed together.

Clev. A-bed together! for shame! why you wou'dn't abandon your bridegroom for me?

Ang. Nay, Mrs. *Clever*, you know when you lie here you always used to be my bed-fellow, and you shan't be put out of your bed for any body, I'm resolved you shall lie with me, and we'll lie awake and talk all night long—Nay, I'm resolv'd I'll pinch you if you won't lie awake and talk to me.

Clev. No, no, you know I'm the sleepest creature in the world:—You had better pinch *Friendly*, if he won't lie awake, and—talk to you.

Ang. I'll swear I have a good mind to stop your mouth—I think the woman's mad to talk so—Oh gemini!

Mar. Methinks Sir *Timothy* stays very long—didn't he promise to follow us immediately?

Ang. He's teaching the servants to dance, as they do before the Emperor of *China*.

Mar. I wish he would dispatch the business we want to have done, and go on with his *Tartarian ballet* afterwards,

Ang. Shall I go and tell him you want to speak with him, Madam?

Mar. If you please, Madam.

Ang. He'll leave the Cham of *Tartary* himself to wait upon you.

[*Going.*
Dear Mrs. Clever, if you should happen to see Mr. *Friendly*, I charge you don't tell him we [*Coming back.* have been talking of him—we shall have him to vain, and in his airs I warrant you.

Clev. No, no, you shall have the pleasure of betraying the secret, and telling him all yourself—but pray make haste and dispatch your embassy.

Ang. I'll be here again in a minute. [*Exit Angelica.*

Clev. Well, what think you of Mrs. *Friendly* that is to be?

Mar. She's in a most violent twitter.

Clev. As all young ladies of her age are at the approach of matrimony.

Mar. She's so out of breath, and so merry and so grave, and so glad, and so smirking, and so smiling.

Clev. And doesn't know whether she goes upon her head or her heels.

Mar. Love! Love! my dear! you know this love is the devil——Aa! pray look this way. [*Looking out,* Is not that the most serene, and most amiable Mr. *Pinch* that's coming into the court.

Clev. 'Tis he, there are certain foolish appurtenances belonging to his face and person, which no one else can pretend to—but I think we are ready for him, and so let him come as soon as he pleases.

Mar. I wouldn't have him see me.

Clev. No, we'll go look upon your oriental lover's preparations for your entertainment. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Pinch and a servant.

Ser. If it shall seem agreeable to you to repose your most worshipful person in this place, I will notify your arrival to Sir *Timothy Tallapoy*, Knight and Mandarin of the Seventh Order.

Pinch. 'Tis very well, friend, notify to your master with what haste you can conveniently, but don't discompose yourself, don't put yourself out of order.

[*Exit servant.*

Very foolish, 'faith. If the rest of my father-in-law's family be of a piece with this fellow, I shall have a good merry time on't among 'em——to be the only wit in the family——I don't know, it may be well enough——'tis better biting than being bit, certainly——Who'd have thought that fly devil, that Mrs. *Mariana*, should have had it in her to put such a practical bite upon one——It cost me two hours in time, besides eight and a penny in monies number'd, to stay for her, and she never came at last.——Very pretty manners truly——I smoke somewhat between the same *Clermont* and her; but no matter, bite's the word. I shall be even with her before to-morrow morning——I believe, if I play'd one, I play'd forty games at all-fours and

and shovel board with Mr. *Bandileer*—poor fellow, he was bloodily in for it at last—'Tis true, indeed, he drank a world of *geneva*—but his cousin will take care of him—She's a discreet woman truly in the main, I believe—she held his head so kindly when he grew a little sickish—Ha ! ha ! 'tis he !

Enter Sir Timothy Tallapoy.

The Lord Chancellor of *Moscow's* mad mace-bearer ! How the devil should he get hither :—I would I were well got by him—I wonder they suffer him to walk about with such a stick in his hand.

Sir Tim. I'll consummate this affair with my son-in-law *Pinch* as soon as may be, and I will then—Ha ! how ! here is that wretched puppy that goeth up and down seeking whom he may bite—Is there no place safe against biting, not even a man's own house ?—You take a strange liberty, friend, after some occurrences that pass'd between us so lately.

Pinch. A strange fellow, this, I don't know what to do, not I—I must try to speak him fair, I think, and see if one can mollify him that way, for 'tis but a word and a blow with him, that I see clearly.

[*Aside.*

Sir Tim. Now is this wicked villain meditating a bite, but by the majesty of *Peking*. I will confound the evil imagination ere it can be brought to perfection—Heark to me, young man, you are one of those that make themselves merry with the most excellent oriental nations : This mansion was not built to receive those people that scoff at the *Cham* of *Tartary*.

Pinch. Oh dear Sir, far be it from me, Sir, to think it was, Sir, I can't think it was built with any such knavish design—I am strangely tempted to bite him.

[*Aside.*

Sir Tim. I am therefore prompted to ask what affair or negociation might induce you to enter here.

Pinch. This is most execrably impertinent. [*Aside.* Affair, Sir ? why really I have an affair.

Sir Tim. Ay ! discuss to me of what nature.

Pinch. Nature, Sir, if I could come to the speech of the proper person—

Sir Tim. I notify to you that I am the most proper person of any one within these walls to whom you may unfold your business.

Pinch.

Pinch. Look ye, Sir, that isn't the matter—I don't say but you may be very proper for ought I know, but my business at present lies more properly with the gentleman of the house.

Sir Tim. Then I notify to you again that it lies with me—come, bar biting, and begin.

Pinch. Good lack it's much the loss of a place should do this. [*Aside.*]

Pray, Sir, no harm I hope; by your leave only.

[*Going by him.*]

Sir Tim. Whither wou'd you pass, friend?

Pinch. Only that way a little—just in at that door, that's all—I shall meet with some of the family; I won't trouble you, Sir,

Sir Tim. Sir, I have undertaken the discussing your business myself, and 'till I have made some further progress in it the family shall not be met with.—No, Sir, by the most potent and serene *Cham* they shall not.

Pinch. Pray, Sir, let me tell you, this is very uncivil, Sir,—I don't know but I may be in haste, and so forth, and may have occasion to speak with a dear friend that lies dangerously sick in the house.

Sir Tim. The mansion is salubrious and healthy; but if it were not, may I suppose you to be a maker up, or preparer of medicines, or, as the *Western* language renders it, an apothecary?

Pinch. Bite! Od I've a good mind,——'twas at my tongue's end. [*Softly aside.*]

Sir Tim. Ha! what is it thou pronouncest in secret?

Pinch. Nothing, nothing in the universe, but only that I beg the favour of a word or two with *Sir Timothy Tallapoy*,—That's all, as I hope to breathe, Sir.

Sir Tim. Prodigiously; how enormously he varies his fable!—Say on. I am he,——tho' thou knew'st it before, thou biting viper thou! I am he——pronounce, say on.

Pinch. Oh dear! this is worse and worse!——You he! alas! I would you were but——

Sir Tim. Speak, what?

Pinch. Yourself, Sir, that's all, only a friendly wish, I would you were your own man.

Sir Tim. Soho! My faithful servants approach;——
I'll teach you to bite one of the worshipful oriental traders.

ders in his own mansion.—Would'st thou infer that I am distracted, of a mind not fit to negotiate? Sirrah! I have been thought fit to negotiate and drink tea with the most excellent governor of Canton, nay with the Viceroy, and the learned *Lipous*.

Pinch. Look ye, friend, I don't say any body's mad, but these are odd circumstances, and *Moorfields* is a good air for people that lose places——when one comes about bus'ness to be interrupted, and interrogated, and bamboozled, and not suffered to——

Sir Tim. So ho! my servants!

Enter Servants.

Pinch. Pshaw! This is a jest indeed! hey day! what's the meaning of all this? Look ye, my name's Squire *Pinch*, I come to marry Sir *Timothy Tallapoy*'s daughter.

Sir Tim. Dost thou bite me with the name of mine ally!—Seize on him, the wretch!

[They lay hold on him.]

Pinch. This is damn'd foolish, faith and troth!——Look ye, I am Sir *Peter Pinch*'s son and heir,—I am a man of wit and pleasure, I understand the town, and I won't be used so, for ne'er a mace-bearer nor a mad-man in *Moscow*.

Sir Tim. Incontinently I think thou art distracted thyself; but it suffices me that I know thee to be a biter, the name that comprehends all kind of villany——could the right-worshipful and most sincere, my friend, Sir *Peter Pinch*, a man of his most categorical principles, engender a biter! impossible! out, thou impostor!

Pinch. So ho! what's there nobody here to take one's part! Sir *Timothy Tallapoy*!

Sir Tim. Hold him fast.

Enter Mariano and Mrs. Clever.

Clev. The lovers will be past reprieving presently—I left 'em mumbling over matrimony with as much eagerness, as if they were to be happy in good earnest.

Mar. Very well; now for our cue here—matters have happen'd as we could have wish'd—

Sir Tim. Most exceeding fair, and my very good friend, my propitious stars have directed me to the discovery of a notorious imposture, and your excellent persons come very opportunely to behold my justice.

Pinch.

Pinch. Well, friend, if he be never so much your master, and the individual numerical Sir *Timothy*, I am as much the individual numerical Squire *Pinch*, as he is the individual numerical Sir *Timothy Tallapoy*.

[*To the servants.*]

Mar. I must confess he has a strange designing kind of a face, I should be very cautious of trusting such a sort of a man upon his bare word.

Clev. Dear Sir *Timothy* have a care of him, methinks I see biting written in his very forehead.

Sir *Tim.* Madam, the sage orientals are not easily bit.

Pinch. Oh ladies, your humble servant——very foolish, faith and troth!——Now you shall see, friend, these ladies know me.—Madam, here's really a foolish adventure.

Clev. What does he mean? he addresses his discourse to us.—Bless me, I'm afraid he's distracted——how he looks! For goodness sake don't come too near him——They say 'tis as bad as poison to be bit by a madman.

Sir *Tim.* It is, Madam, what we may properly call an egregious degree of folly mixt with an egregious degree of impudence——'tis what the learned in the *Western* nations call a complication.

Pinch. Phaw! phoo! this is all fooling! ladies! Madam! here are a whimsical set of people would persuade me my name isn't *Pinch*.

Sir *Tim.* I told your Ladyship what he drives at, he would bite me under a wrong name.

Mar. And pray, Sir,——oh dear——hold him fast, is your name *Pinch*?

Pinch. Bite! Bite! Madam.

Sir *Tim.* You see, most excellent lady, you see what he would be at.

Mar. And do you really think, Sir, your name is *Pinch*?

Pinch. Nay, Madam, I tell you I'm like to be us'd scurvily,—this is all ridiculous! Speak truth now——why as if you didn't know one——This is biting indeed!

Clev. Bless me! my dear! did you ever see this man before?

Mar. Never with my eyes, Madam.—Sir *Timothy*,
let

let me conjure you to have a care, there is certainly some very villanous design laid against you, this is some plot.

Pinch. What is the meaning of all this?—Didn't I come down in the coach with you to-day? Mrs. Mariana! Madam.

Clev. The confident wretch! he has got your name too——hark ye, friend, what good does it do you now to counterfeit another body's name? Why you couldn't think but it must needs be found out at last, and then you know the law is very severe in these cases.

Mar. 'Tis very probable he had his eye upon the young lady's fortune.

Pinch. Why this is downright making a fool of one. I thought you had been more a gentlewoman.

Sir Tim. Bokee! Do you [To a servant. and your fellows take care to confine him in the cellar—I will supplicate the *Mandarins* of justice that punishment may be inflicted according to his demerits—away with him.

Mar. I never saw him in my life.

Sir Tim. Madam, we live in a flagitious biting age, and a biting climate——away with him——for my part I wish I were well turn'd of the Cape of Good-hope.

Pinch. Prythee be quiet, friend—talk of putting one in a cellar! phoo! what a jest is that? Nay I won't stir a foot, that's flat.—Help! murder! ladies! why you won't? what, will you pull one's arm off? you'll answer all this—if ever I bite any body again—pray—stay—hear me— [Servants force him off.

Mar. Upon my word I am heartily frighten'd; he made a most terrible noise—I believe the best way will be to get him out of the house?

Sir Tim. Fear nothing, Lady, I will so muzzle him.

Clev. That he can neither bite nor bellow, 'tis the best course you can take with him.

Mar. Well, of all the disagreeable things one meets with, nothing is so shocking to me as a biter—you meet with nothing of this kind in *China*, Sir Timothy.

Sir Tim. 'Twould be felony, without benefit of the clergy.

Mar.

Mar. Well, they are a polite people! how agreeably graceful is that habit of Sir *Timothy's*, what an image of the *Eastern* wisdom is gives us!

Sir Tim. They are certainly a great people; arts began with them——It is thought the necessary sciences of eating and drinking were discover'd some ages among them, before they were known in *Europe*.

Clev. Concerning beards and their management I have heard indeed——

Sir Tim. The whole oeconomy of the beard was treated of seven thousand years ago, by a learned *Chinese* philosopher, in fifteen volumes. Ah, Madam, might I but hope for the pleasure of seeing your ladyship in the most glorious City of *Peking*, I would not come hither again to be emperor of the *West*.

Mar. We women are born to obey——Sir *Timothy* may be sure I shall follow my husband all the world over.

Sir Tim. Happy! happy man will he be.

Enter Angelica, Friendly disguised, Scribblescrabble with writings.

Ang. Here's a gentleman enquires for your ladyship.
[To Mariana.]

Mar. Sir *Timothy*, this is my relation, in whose behalf we are to do the charitable deed I spoke to you of.

Sir Tim. Sir you are honour'd!——Your character is affinity with the illustrious.

Friend. Sir, I have always conceiv'd as much.

Ang. Oh gemini! the thing is done, [To *Clever aside*.] and I vow I'm glad 'tis over. I wouldn't have it to do again for all the world——Mr. *Friendly* did look so upon one, and my heart did go so pit-a-pat all the while.

Clev. Hush! be quiet now. You shall talk to me of it for two hours together by and by.

Sir Tim. Are the deeds drawn according to your ladyship's command and direction?

Mar. Exactly; if you do us the honour to concur, the matter is at an end.

Scrib. You deliver this as your act and deed, Sir, for the use of this gentleman?

Sir Tim. I do, Sir, with my full intentions.

[Mariana and Sir Tim. execute the deed, and

and with much happiness may herchy redound and accrue to him.

Friend. Sir, I must always acknowledge you the author of my happiness, and will take an opportunity to convince you of my gratitude.

Enter Lady Stale and Clerimont.

Stale. Tell not me, *Mr. Clermont*, I'm not to be fobb'd off so—I'll find him out if he be above ground.

Cler. Why, I tell you he's just now upon making his fortune, and you'll ruin all.

Stale. I tell you I'll have him whole and sole, as the law directs, with all his ways, water-courses, easements, and appurtenances, I'll not bate him an inch.

Cler [*to Friendly.*] Look ye, Sir, the matter is gone as far as 'twill bear, and you have nothing to do now but to make good the ground we have got for you.

Sir Tim. What is the meaning of this? What does this lady's passion import?

Mar. Some weeping and much talking, I believe. Ten to one but she tells us more of her mind.

Sir Tim. Madam, may I inquire— [*To Lady Stale.*

Stale. Sir, I am reduc'd to the last extremity, I am defeated and evil intreated, I am *deseperé*, by the most inconstant person——

Friend. That ever had the honour to be in a fair lady's favour.

[*Pulling off his disguise.*

Stale. Oh, are you there, Sir? 'Tis exceeding well, indeed! I am given to understand that you are faithless, Sir, that you are false, Sir, that you are making your body over by a marriage contract, to the daughter of *Sir Timothy Tallapoy*, in order to defraud me, your lawful creditor, of my natural dues and perquisites.

Sir Tim. How, most exceeding fair lady, are there machinations against your most faithful humble servant? Is your relation *Mr. Friendly*. [*To Mariana.*

Mar. Since the matter is out, 'tis most certainly so, my relation is *Mr. Friendly*, or *Mr. Friendly* is my relation, you may take it either way.

Sir Tim. But, Madam!

Mar. But *Sir Timothy*! I hope you won't quarrel with him for that: Hark ye, let me talk with you a little.

[*Takes him aside,*
Friend.

Friend. And does common fame really say all this ?

Stale. Ay marry does it, to thy shame, thou traitor !

Friend. Look ye, for the matter of the matrimony 'tis too true ; but for the other part, I stand up for my constancy, and do aver I was never false in my life ; for my trial I put myself upon my country here present, and your ladyship may go on with the evidence as soon as you see it.

Stale. Oh wretch ! do'st thou not expect the house should fall down upon thee this instant ?

Friend. No, I trust in the timber-work.

Stale. Oh thou wickedness incarnate ! how often hast thou look'd upon me and smil'd, and then smil'd and look'd upon me again !

Friend. Very often truly, being for the most part of a merry disposition, as the worshipful bench here know.

Stale. But say how often amorously, say, speak truth, if thou dar'st.

Friend. Never.

Clev. A short answer that.

Stale. Madam, I believe he has squeez'd this poor hand——— [Crying.]

Ang. Did you squeeze that filthy bony thing ? You shan't touch mine.

Stale. Till I have been forc'd to cry, oh !

Clev. Very barbarous that, in my mind.

Cler. But no sign of love.

Clev. Oh none at all.

Stale. Did not you promise me to put me out of my pain before to-morrow ; out of my pain, I stick to that ?

Friend. And faith, I think I have been as good as my word ; the Devil's in it if you don't know what to trust to now.

Stale. Ah ! thou art a fellow of sweet principles ! but I know what you want, you want to put me in a fit, do you ? But I'll do my best to keep it down. [Sobbing] Oh ! how it heaves ! how it heaves here ! Dear *Clever*, ease my lace quickly, or I shall drop down, I am not able to bear it.

Cler. Nay, Madam, he's a most perfidious wretch, that's certain ; but since you see there's no good to be done

done with him, you had much better retire before you fall into a fresh disorder; you'll only give him an occasion of a malicious grin.

Clev. Mr. *Clerimont* tells you true; these rattle-headed young fellows don't know how to value a discreet elderly passion.

Stale. Ah, *Clever*, thou art certainly in the right. I'll leave him to his flirt! Well, this is my fifteenth misfortune of this kind since I have been a widow—— But I'll retire into the country this instant I'm resolv'd, and mind good books, and making sweetmeats and salves, and never trust in a man of five-and-twenty again.

Friend. And will she go? Will the dear creature go?

[*Exit Lady Stale.*]

Ang. Well, I'll swear you're a cross-grain'd ill-natur'd thing, I'll vow I have a good mind to hate you.

Friend. What for sacrificing all to you, you dear little creature?

Ang. Be quiet, can't you! Don't you see my father?

Sir Tim. Well, Madam, you see your power over your slave——Mr. *Friendly*, as this lady has done you the honour to intercede for you, I declare I receive you as my son-in-law, and will make good what I seal'd to for my daughter's fortune——I hope you are no Biter.

Friend. A most profess'd enemy to all fools of that kind.

Sir Tim. I like you the better, you may come to good.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. The peasant *Gregory Grumble*, who was imprison'd in the cellar, notifies to your worthiness, that the person last committed is the very real Esquire *Pinch*, his master.

Sir Tim. Ha! say'st thou! the circumstance displeaseth——Let him be releas'd. I am glad my daughter is not bitten however——It must be of great grief to his parents to hear that he taketh unto biting after this manner.

Enter Pinch.

Pinch. Look ye, gentlemen and ladies, this is mighty fine, very exceeding fine; here have *Gregory* and I been put in a cellar among old shoes, broken bottles, and wicker

wicker baskets, for no manner of substantial reason in the earth.

Sir *Tim*, Young gentleman, the disaster has been of your own seeking. I am sorry to say it, but though you were ten times the son of my friend of Sir Peter *Pinch*, and a Biter, I would not affy my daughter to you.

Pinch. Ha!—You may take your daughter, and stop your—I woud'n't marry her an she were a Cherubin.

Mar. For ought I see 'tis well the matter has happened as it has, since the only one thing that ever Sir *Timothy* and Mr. *Pinch* could have agreed in, would have been in not liking one another.

Pinch. Well perhaps 'twas, and perhaps 'twan't, Madam. Look ye, I desire you not to concern yourself about me, I shan't concern myself about you, poz.

Mar. Why this is all right again, for we are certainly agreed as to that matter too; however I promise to wear a willow for your sake, when I hear you are sped.

Pinch. Well, well, you may wear what you please. I believe I know what your husband will wear, sweet Madam Nimble-Chops.

Mar. Don't be in a choler, and I'll bring you acquainted with my husband. Sir *Timothy*, it is sometime since that I have had a very particular esteem for your family.

Sir *Tim*. Madam, you confer honour.

Mar. And in order to make myself a part of it, about a week ago I was married to this gentleman, your nephew. [Pointing to Clerimont.

Sir *Tim*. How, to my nephew! oh thou most perfidious! is it possible?

Cler. The thing is most certainly so, Sir.

Sir *Tim*. Is it so, Sir? why then the world is all false, there is nothing but villainy, biting—jilting—

Pinch. Bite! What art thou bit at last, old boy, old *Fobus*, ha!

Sir *Tim*. Get thee out of my doors this minute, thou most egregious wretched puppy, or I will so batter that skull of thine——

Pinch. Hold, keep the peace—take away his stick—what d'ye mean, ha! what would you be at? d'ye think heads are made for nothing but to be broke? very pretty sport, truly.

Mar.

Mar. Come, Sir *Timothy*, be pacified; I fancy we shall agree much better as uncle and niece, than as man and wife.

Sir Tim. Oh thou false creature! I am enrag'd, and with all the western world was on fire——But I'll take post for the *East-Indies* this instant, and never converse with man, woman, or child again, that was born on this side the *Cape of Good Hope*. [*Exit Sir Tim.*]

Clev. Let him go; we shall find some way to mollify him, I warrant you, when the first heat is over.

Short are the passionate fits of love and rage,
Which warms the sickly veins of feeble age.

And though the flame

Blaze out, and for a moment seems to rise,
Yet soon the fuel fails, and then it dies.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

EPILOGUE.

OF all the taxes which the Poet pays,
Those funds of verse, none are so hard to raise
As prologues and as epilogues to plays.

So many mighty wits are gone before,
They've rifled all the Muse's sacred store;
Like conqu'ring armies through the province pass'd,
Swept all, and left it ruin'd, void, and waste;

Yet, conscientious you can still demand
Large contributions from the wretched land;
Expect that we should still pursue the theme,
Tho' you deny to us, what you allow'd to them,

Bold satyr then you did permit to reign,
Satyr, that noise and nonsense could restrain;
Then to be pleas'd and taught the hearers came,
They got instruction, and the Poet Fame.

Then Strephon's verse to either sex gave law,
And charm'd the fair, and kept the fools in awe.

But now, for reasons to yourselves best known,
Your fathers' wit and pleasures you disown;
Hither ye herds of fools securely come;

Prologue and Epilogue, 7 MA 55
Your ancient foes, are muzzled now and dumb.

We women think it hard, when laws prevail

That take away our privilege to rail;
Maids, wives, and mistresses assert the cause,
In spite of Reformation and the laws:

And tho' the censur'd stage no tales must tell,
Yet visiting-days and tea may do as well.

Henceforth, in solemn meetings of the fair,
Our own dear sex and all their failings spare;

Let no ill-natur'd she severely say
What hideous ill-dress'd things she saw that day:

Let envious ugliness no more reprove
Her fairer friend's successful power in love;

But let each able tongue do all she can,

Let satyr be the word, and the whole subject Man.

Tell of dull knights, sad squires, and wretched cits,
Displaying poets, and brisk biting wits;
Then say what wine, what friends, what choice delights,

Employ their dull days, and yet duller nights;

Laugh ev'ry fool of ev'ry kind and fashion,

And be the true reformers of the nation

End of the FIRST VOLUME.

